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AUGUST 1954

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Design

Commonwealth tastes

EXACTLY A YEAR AGO we published a selection of British products that had been chosen for exhibition on the official British stand at the 1953 Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto. The popular success of that display has encouraged the Board of Trade to repeat the experiment and again to invite the Council of Industrial Design to choose the 500 goods to be shown.

The purpose of these overseas prestige displays seems not to have been properly understood in some trade circles at home. It is suggested that between them the Board of Trade and the Council of Industrial Design aim to upset the existing pattern of export trade, to switch foreign buyers from the steady, traditional, conservative British exports to others that are, at best, problematical and, at worst, un-British imitations of North American wares.

This is, of course, nonsense. There is no such thought behind these displays. There is no intention whatever to cast doubt or discredit on the distinguished traditional designs that have over many generations built a fine reputation for British manufactures. The whole purpose of these overseas exhibitions of modern British designs is to supplement, not supplant, our traditional exports and to draw attention to the truth that in a world of fast-changing tastes we, too, have many good new things to offer. We must impress on the world that 'modern living' is no monopoly of North America, that Britain produces designs that are every bit as inventive and up-to-date as those of her competitors; designs, moreover, that are both British in character and yet geared to overseas tastes.

But, say the doubters, how can we gear our designs to every market? If we produce specials for the U.S.A., will Canada want them, and, if Canada will take them, is that any proof that our other important customers in Australia or South Africa or New Zealand will also like them?

This point was squarely faced at a recent gathering of chairmen of the various trade committees of the British Commonwealth Chamber of Commerce in the United States and it was their unanimous opinion, supported by many examples, that goods suitable for sale in the United States would, in general, be equally popular in other markets and particularly in the English-speaking Commonwealth countries.

The Council of Industrial Design has recently had a small but significant proof of this. A large Australian store reproduced the Council's 'Round the Table' exhibition of tableware and furniture, held last November at the Tea Centre in London, in which several of the designs chosen for Toronto were on view. The commercial success of this Australian experiment was such that the firm has asked for first refusal to reproduce any future similar displays put on by the Council - and that from the country which so many British firms still regard as hidebound in its taste and wedded to the past.

POINTS and POINTERS

DESIGN CENTRE The Government has been asked by the CoID to approve the setting-up in London of a Design Centre for British Industry. The project, which is subject to the granting of the necessary funds by Parliament, would be the logical and culminating development of the many large and small exhibitions which the Council has organised during its career.

The announcement is made in the Council's Ninth Annual Report, which is published this month.* The Report stresses the link between the export drive and the Council's selective exhibitions of British goods in foreign countries. Through these prestige displays manufacturers are discovering new markets at a time of intensive foreign competition, particularly in the dollar markets. Readers will remember the Council's stand 'U K Modern' described in this magazine twelve months ago: this time, on pages 18-20, we give a preview of some new designs to be shown by its successor at the forthcoming Canadian National Exhibition.

Exhibitions in Washington, Bulawayo, Zürich, Stockholm and Utrecht feature in the Report, as well as those arranged specially for showing in this country. They all had one point in common, for the selectors in each case based their choice on the range of current good designs in the Council's illustrated index 'Design Review'. It is now imperative that this index be backed up by a permanent but changing selective exhibition which, in the words of the Report, would be "a national shop-window for the most interesting current designs from British consumer goods industries". Home and foreign buyers in particular would benefit from this central display.

* THE COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN NINTH ANNUAL REPORT 1953-1954. H M S O, 1s 6d

REALISM In April we noted an experiment which has been taking place at the LCC Central School of Arts and Crafts. The first fruit of the experiment, the lighting fitting, was exhibited recently, complete with all stages of the development from initial sketches through working drawings, jigs and moulds (all made at the School) to the finished article. In presenting the display the principal, William Johnstone, thought that this was the first time a British art school had carried out the design and construction of a single product, relying entirely on its own resources. This then is the shape of things to come at the Central and an example to spur the efforts of other art schools. We shall be describing this project in more detail in the next issue.

MINISTER SPEAKS "There is any amount of money about for art", said Sir David Eccles, when speaking at the Convocation in July at the Royal College of Art. The Minister was referring to the busy world markets for fine art, and the opportunities which exist for the modern artist. In following his theme he spoke of the State as patron, and the way in which the Ministry of Works and the College had collaborated at the Coronation.

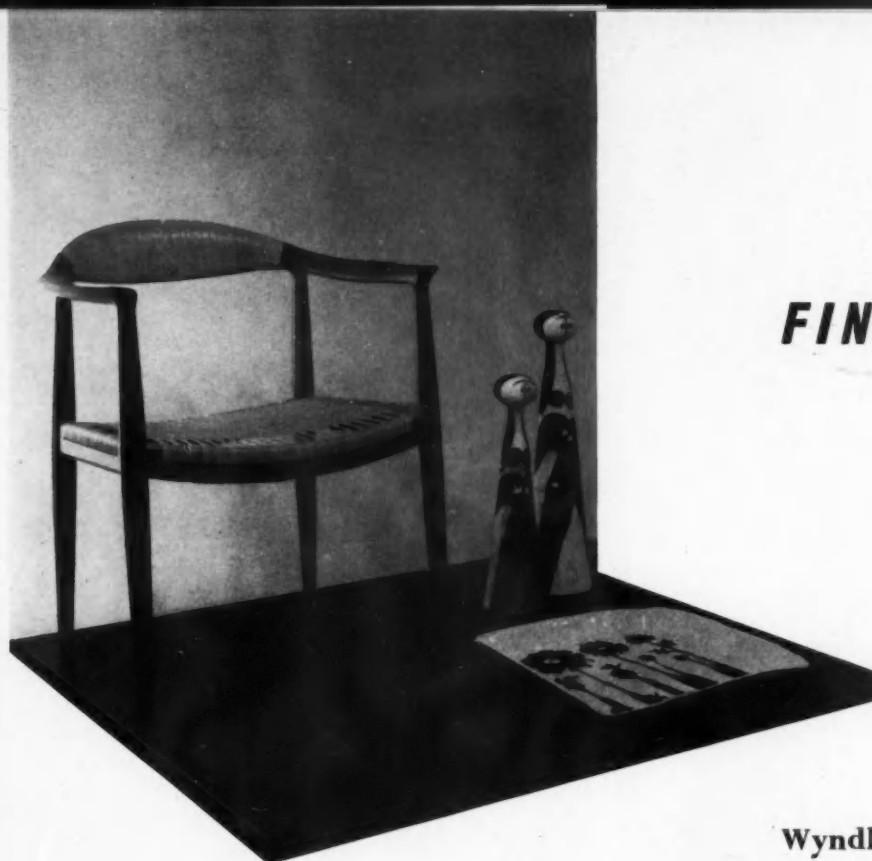
The fact that there is also money about for *industrial* art was made clear by Robin Darwin, the principal, who pointed to the numbers of graduates from the industrial design schools finding jobs in firms. As an indication of the interest which is being shown in the College abroad, he said that an exhibition of students' work was to be held shortly at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and possibly travelled to other American cities.

MUSEUM MODERN The Geffrye Museum at Shoreditch, well known as an educational centre of activity so far as the history of 'family' furniture is concerned, has started a new venture in showing variations on a contemporary theme. (There was already one room of

modern furnishings in the historical series.) One large room in the annexe has been divided visually, by means of string screens and different wall-papers, into three rooms for living - bedroom, sitting-room and dining-room. It is an interesting example of an exhibition put on by enthusiasm and goodwill: little has been spent except on some fabrics (others have been borrowed) which can be used again, either in a different context or in other parts of the museum, but use has been made of colour and wallpapers. The furniture - all in the lower price ranges and therefore locally acceptable - has been lent by manufacturers. The exhibition is well worth a visit, particularly by those people (retailers and educationists) who say that 'it can't be done here' because of lack of space, money, or local interest. Certainly it excites the Shoreditch 'locals', as well as their children and those others who visit the Geffrye. Possibly, if museum convention allows, some of the older Victorian pieces may even be transferred to these rooms to show how happily different periods can live together.

MOORE IN THE AIR A comparison has been drawn by a British aircraft designer between the art of Henry Moore and aircraft engineering. Pointing to Mr Moore's well-known 'Recumbent figure', which was carved from one piece of stone, Keith Legg, assistant designer at Short Brothers, said that the sculptor had taken integral construction for granted, whereas "aircraft designers are only just beginning to wonder".

Mr Legg said that we are entering an era of aircraft design involving the use of large single-piece components instead of parts built up from a number of different units riveted together. The advantages of integral construction are that the parts have stability when compressed and make possible an overall saving in weight. Although the introduction of this technique promises to be expensive, British firms are already experimenting with large forging and extrusion presses.



FINMAR

Wyndham Goodden

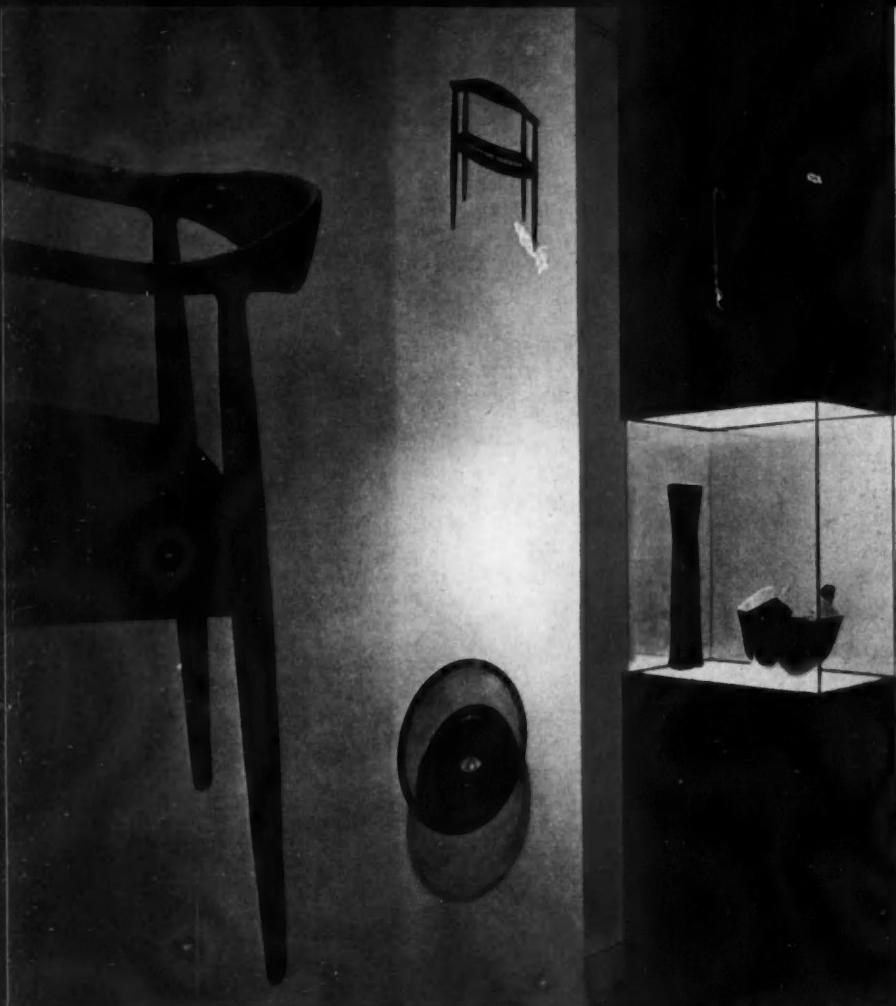
ABOVE *Johannes Hansens' elegant chair, designed by Hans Wegner, and examples of Arabia ceramics, designed by Birger Kaipiainen, shown on a cantilevered raft above the basement pool.*

THE OPENING OF FINMAR'S new showrooms in Kingly Street, London, is much more important, to the general public and to professional design, than a bare move from the comparative backwater of Holbein Place to the centre of the West End. It represents the coming-of-age of an idea: the consolidation of a house devoted exclusively and on a big scale to those qualities and services which it is the business of this magazine to notice and promote.

Finmar was originally launched before the war by Geoffrey Boumphrey to market in this country the designs of the Finnish architect, Aalto. Finland in those days was a far mysterious country, known, if known at all, for its fishing: from which occasionally the more than life-size figures of Sibelius, Aalto, Nurmi, would stride across our stage. Everything about it was exciting; and Aalto's designs were typical, if the unexpected can be typical, of its flavour. In those

days originality was at a premium; and the effort to be original was often more apparent than the quality of true originality behind such efforts. But Aalto's designs were brilliant inventions, as good as they were new, and Finmar prospered within its modest limitations.

It was impossible that Finmar should survive the war in its old form, but its goodwill and the right to import licences survived. Its new owner, Paul Ernst Stemann, had new horizons, different contacts, and an idea. What that idea was, and is, will be examined here. Like all controlling ideas, it is difficult to put into words, but easy to see in action. Stemann is a remarkable young man, a Dane, whose whole training and practice had previously been in journalism. He was, in fact, serving his paper in London when this idea came to him. Now he controls one of the most exciting wholesale businesses in the kingdom.



RIGHT Two uses of Finmar's Klee-like signal designed by Hans Schleger. The staircase with its blue wall can be seen leading up to first-floor showrooms of glass, ceramics, rugs, etc. To the left is the main showroom entrance.

RIGHT Top-floor director's office showing in the foreground Hansen chairs and table. Check rug by Norriska Kompaniet; an Art-luce standard lamp designed by Gino Sarfatti in the background.

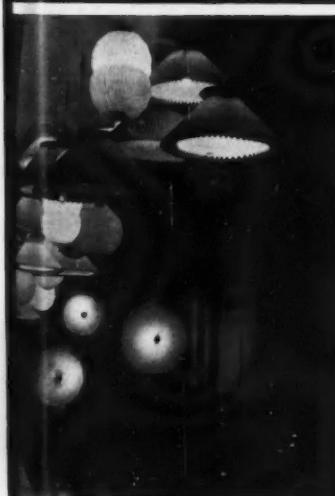
LEFT Blown-up photographs of Finmar's imports skilfully used as a foil to examples of actual merchandise. This picture gives some idea of the largely black-and-white effect of the basic decoration, showing to great advantage the colours of individual pieces.

To say that his contacts were different, when he first took over, is somewhat to jump the gun: for at Finmar's rebirth, four and a half years ago, Stemann had no contacts in his new profession at all. What he had, and has, was a lively eye, a good working philosophy, and, as difficult times soon proved, great tenacity of purpose and business acumen. It was therefore supremely lucky - the kind of fate that is beyond luck - that his first introductions, and so his first advisers in Denmark and Sweden respectively, were Soren Hansen of Fritz Hansens Eftf and Elias Svedberg of N K. Anyone who knows these two designer-manufacturers, their popularity and influence not only in their own countries but across half the world (there must be few of my readers who do not), will appreciate Finmar's good fortune as Stemann planned his programme of imported household wares from Scandinavia generally.

In its post-war guise, Finmar started with only four lines - two Windsor chairs, a table and a chest-of-drawers. Everything imported had then to come within utility specification, after paying freight and customs charges - and still allow the normal retail margin. Furthermore, to get freight charges low enough, large quantities of each had to be ordered from the manufacturers. The staff

RIGHT Multi-coloured Klint lanterns and paper shades lighting the basement like Aladdin's cave.

RIGHT Reserved, efficient wall-desks placed conveniently for buyers opposite the reception and information counter. Black des 15, terracotta walls.



consisted of one eighteen-year-old girl: there were no premises. Today, thanks to those first vital orders from the greater London stores which Finmar won, the business imports 300 lines, has a staff of 25, and has been able to commission James Cubitt & Partners to remodel the six-floor house in Kingly Street to be its central showrooms.

On what basis are these goods selected? Primarily for two reasons: because they interest Stemann, and because their price is right. In 1949 he saw Italian light-fittings at an exhibition in Scotland: Finmar imports them. Three years ago he was struck by Finnish Arabia pottery and Venini glass at the Triennale in Milan: Finmar imports them. Some of the lines are by now so popular and famous that one begins to forget their origin: Klint lampshades, Hansen chairs, Gense cutlery. It was wise and indeed inevitable - with its established name and previous history - that Finmar should look first to Scandinavia: it was equally inevitable that Finmar should turn next to Italy, whose post-war renaissance in all fields of design has been so dazzling and so surprising. Today the only major producer of interesting modern design to be outside Finmar's range is, of course, the USA - both price and dollar restrictions making this prohibitive; but American influence is already a positive factor in its sales.

Believing before selling

What then is the idea that makes the opening of these showrooms something more than the successful development of a business enterprise? Irving Richards of Raymor, a somewhat similar organisation in the U.S.A. which has been developing over the past 25 years, is reported as saying that a design is as good as the *entrepreneur* who promotes it. That is a little too one-sided to be altogether true. But if we read it in conjunction with Stemann's own 'nothing is produced until it is sold' - which is true only in a highly specialised sense - we can see the outlines of a working method telescoped into aphorism. Set out as a sort of progressive equation, it might read something like this: good design = better living = easier living = social mores = social economics = intelligent promotion. In other words, what will inevitably win popular acceptance is not a style but a solution: a *mode juste*. In the above equation the visual aspect has been omitted altogether, because if all the other parts are fulfilled the visual aspect will come to be accepted, however momentarily shocking. This is the same as guessing that the Rolls-Royce or Morris Minor of today would have been accepted by the Victorians, if the intervening stages of evolution from the horseless carriage could have been omitted. Today socio-economic changes are probably happening faster, and changing the pattern of our lives more profoundly, than at any equal period of time: not only is this happening consciously, but we are specifically working on it with legislation and research. In consequence designers start with a set of requirements without needing to breed the visual solution (except as a matter of courtesy) from traditional forms, apt as these may have been in their day. Stemann is saying that there is more to trade than business; you must actively care about the way of life towards which the great core of society is moving, and aim to solve its problems neatly, durably, agreeably with your wares. The *entrepreneur* must have most of the knowledge and all of the integrity of the designer himself.

It is no accident that Finmar's new director comes from a country which has already achieved an almost classless society. Very few in Denmark are too rich, very few are too poor. It is, therefore, no accident that he opens his new showrooms in the greatest city in the world that is also reaching for this kind of state. For this is where the great new public lies. The poor have more money, the



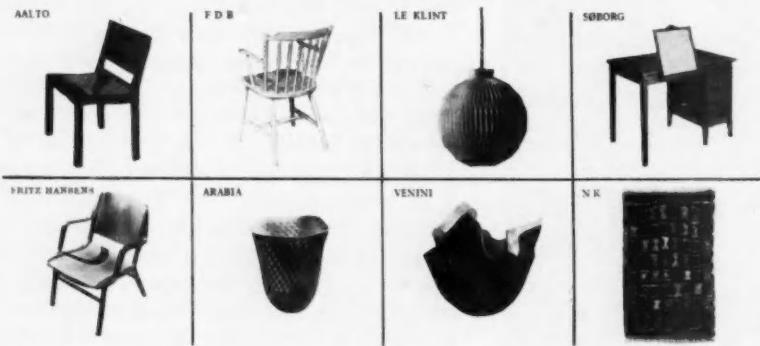
well-to-do have less. The poor by expanding, the rich by pruning, are slowly creating a common way of life whose principal symptom, one guesses, is babysitting. Look into any basement window, says Stemann, and you will see how sensibly the English have solved their way of life. They live in the kitchen. And if some of us are surprised at this cave-like picture of ourselves, others will rejoice that no more basements will in consequence be built.

There is, however, a basement at 26 Kingly Street, and very pretty it is. The architect has cleverly used what was once the cellars of a warehouse, from which merchandise was mechanically hoisted through a hole in the ground floor, to make a lighted pool of water plants and fish. Amongst the chairs and tables one looks down on this cool surprise from the rails of the original opening. This veritable *fin mar* is perhaps the only extravagant note, at just the right point, in a sober, handsome and ingenious piece of remodelling. Although the general effect is spectacular, it has been achieved with great restraint and economy – even colour being largely relegated to stairs and corridors in order to give the wares themselves their utmost qualities. A discreet, but intriguing, window – for this is wholesale only – half-showing specimen pots and glasses, invites one into the main hall: across the length of which again one senses, rather than sees, further mysteries of display behind a half-diaphanous curtain. Apart from two bold red walls on the ground floor the main effect is of black or grey and white, with touches of full yellow and pale blue staircase walls. At the head of the stairs on the first floor is Finmar's trademark, designed by Hans Schleger, used as door furniture. This is a most effective use of an otherwise almost too impersonal signpost. Leading down to the basement pool is, though the visual pun is probably unconscious, a double flight of chairs – showing one specimen of each model currently stocked. And where the tides of this pool have receded from the subterranean walls, glowing like cosmic limpets are the famous Klint shades.

Some of the detailing is very nice: heavy slate used handsomely as a show table along one wall; an iron-lipped fireplace in the director's own office; well-planned wall desks for the booking of orders in the entrance hall: a neat use of mirror to increase the apparent length of the basement: pleasant louvres for the weather-foil heating. But the architect's main achievement has clearly been not merely to convert a rather unpromising building into an efficient headquarters, but with evident modesty and economy to provide Finmar with a highly flexible display unit concentrating all its virtues on the virtues of the wares themselves.

LEFT Specimen chairs from Finmar's range lead down towards the basement pool – the cellar of the original warehouse.

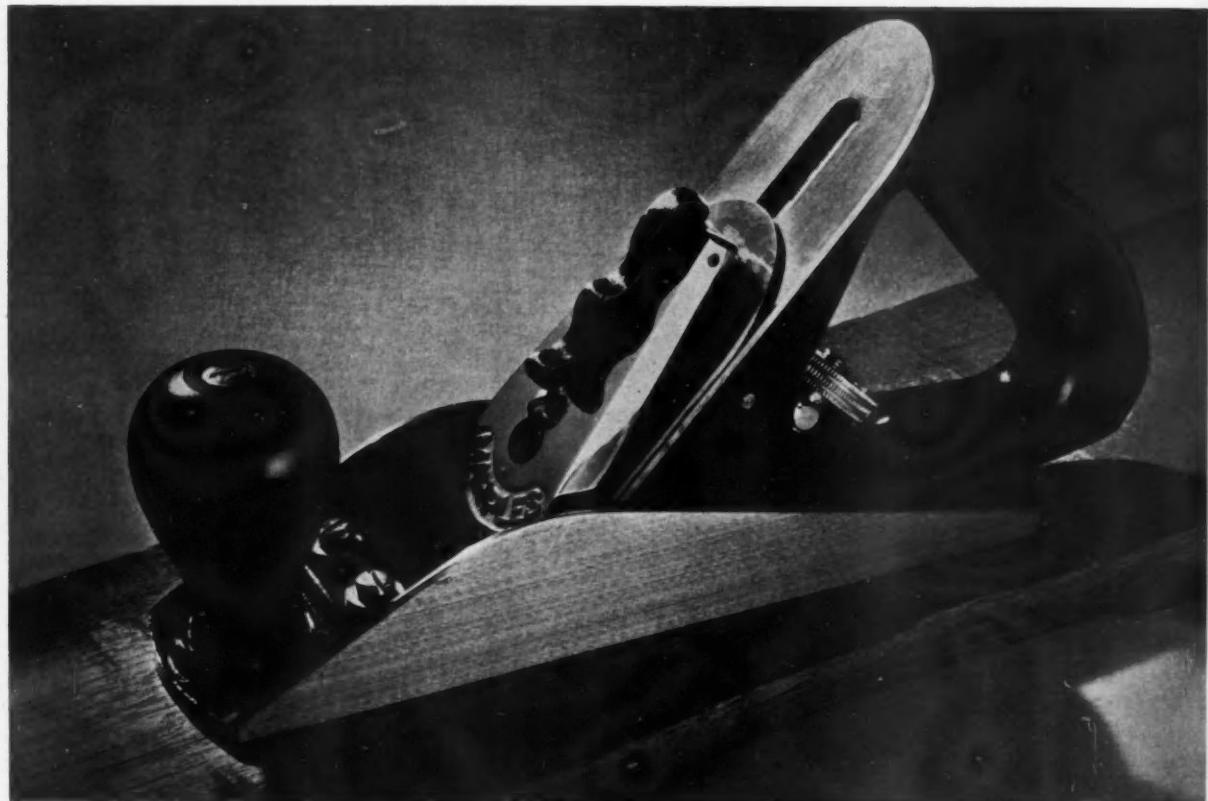
MILESTONES IN FINMAR'S CAREER



CASE HISTORY

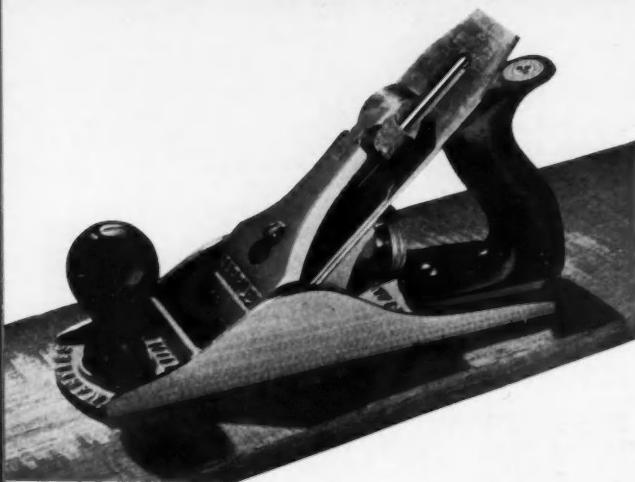
SMOOTHING PLANE

An efficient smoothing plane that has been in demand for many years was the starting-point for David Pye, who designed a new version which looks, and is, better than the earlier type.

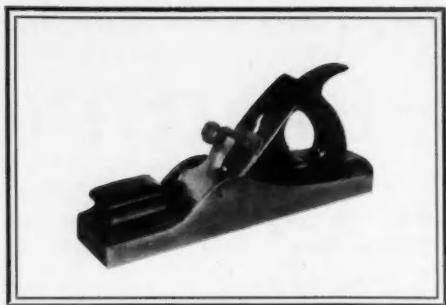


The new Marples plane designed by David Pye. Wooden parts are all machined from dry beech and given a black cellulose finish. The clamp is chromium plated and the adjustment wheel is of brass.

THE NEW SMOOTHING PLANE illustrated on these pages was designed by David Pye for the old-established Sheffield firm of William Marples & Sons Ltd, makers of all kinds of woodworking hand-tools. Marples had for some years been making planes of the normal 'American' pattern, i, a type which is remarkably efficient and very widely used. If well made it can hardly be said to have positive defects, but Marples, together with the designer of the new plane, felt that some improvements could be



I Normal type 'American' plane made by William Marples & Son Ltd.



Old English metal panel plane. Planes of this type were individually made by hand, and therefore expensive. There were many variations of shape, some of them, as may be seen here, very fine indeed. They had a high finish and several of them are still in use.



2 Designer's model. This model was made to show and try out the general form of the plane and to test the mechanism.



3 First prototype. The form of the body casting has been simplified. It is so designed that the bed for the mouth-plate and the surfaces on which the frog beds are in one plane and can be machined together. The front knob shown is a stock one and not of the designed shape.

made in performance as well as in appearance. The new plane differs from the old principally in five ways. Firstly, the heel of the cutter rests on an accurately machined surface in the casting which forms the body of the plane, and thus the back of the cutter is solidly supported at its lowest possible point – a thing seldom achieved in similar planes of the old type. It is supported at the heel and at the heel alone, which prevents a plane with the relatively thin 'American' type of cutter from 'chattering'. Secondly, because the heel of the cutter is supported in this way, the frog must be fixed in position, as in the old

English metal planes, some of them probably the finest woodworking tools ever made. The frog of the new plane is of wood – again as in the English metal planes. Thirdly, the mouth of the plane can be made wider or narrower by moving a mouth-plate held by two screws. A similar device is used in some Continental wooden horned jack planes. Fourthly, the clamp lever is designed to provide a grip for the fingers when the plane is used on its side on a shooting board (usually a job for a jack or trying plane, but the lever has to be made standard for all bench planes). The 'American' type of plane is awkward in this respect

and demands unnecessary effort from the right hand. Fifthly, the distribution of metal in the body casting is more even than has been usual, with more ribs.

The cutter of the new plane is rounded at its upper end. The square top is only necessary where the cutter is adjusted with a hammer, and need never have been introduced into the screw-adjusted planes. In addition the round top is more comfortable to hold when sharpening. The slope of the wooden frog is $1\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ greater than that of the surface in the casting on which the heel of the cutter rests. Thus even if the wood moved slightly the bedding of the heel of the cutter would not be affected. It is traditionally supposed that a plane iron should lie in close contact with the frog: a practical impossibility in wooden planes and an extreme improbability in metal ones. It will be found in practice that the iron usually has three fairly

the overhang of the heel of the cutter, and thus increasing the risk of 'chatter', which perhaps explains why it is seldom done, for a plane with a large mouth can be made to do most things if the back-iron is used properly.

The design of the plane evolved in several stages: a sketch-drawing of the general arrangement, a full-size model in which wooden parts roughly represented the castings, but in which all moving parts were workable, 2, a working general-arrangement drawing and drawings from which patterns for castings were made. Then followed the making of patterns and a trial batch of castings, one set of which, when machined, formed the basis of a first prototype with hand-made wooden parts, 3. The first prototype was then tested, with the result that a second prototype with improvements was made, 4. From that stage it was found



4 Second prototype. The front knob (unusually large for a smoothing plane) is now of its correct shape. The handle has been enlarged to take four fingers - also unusual.

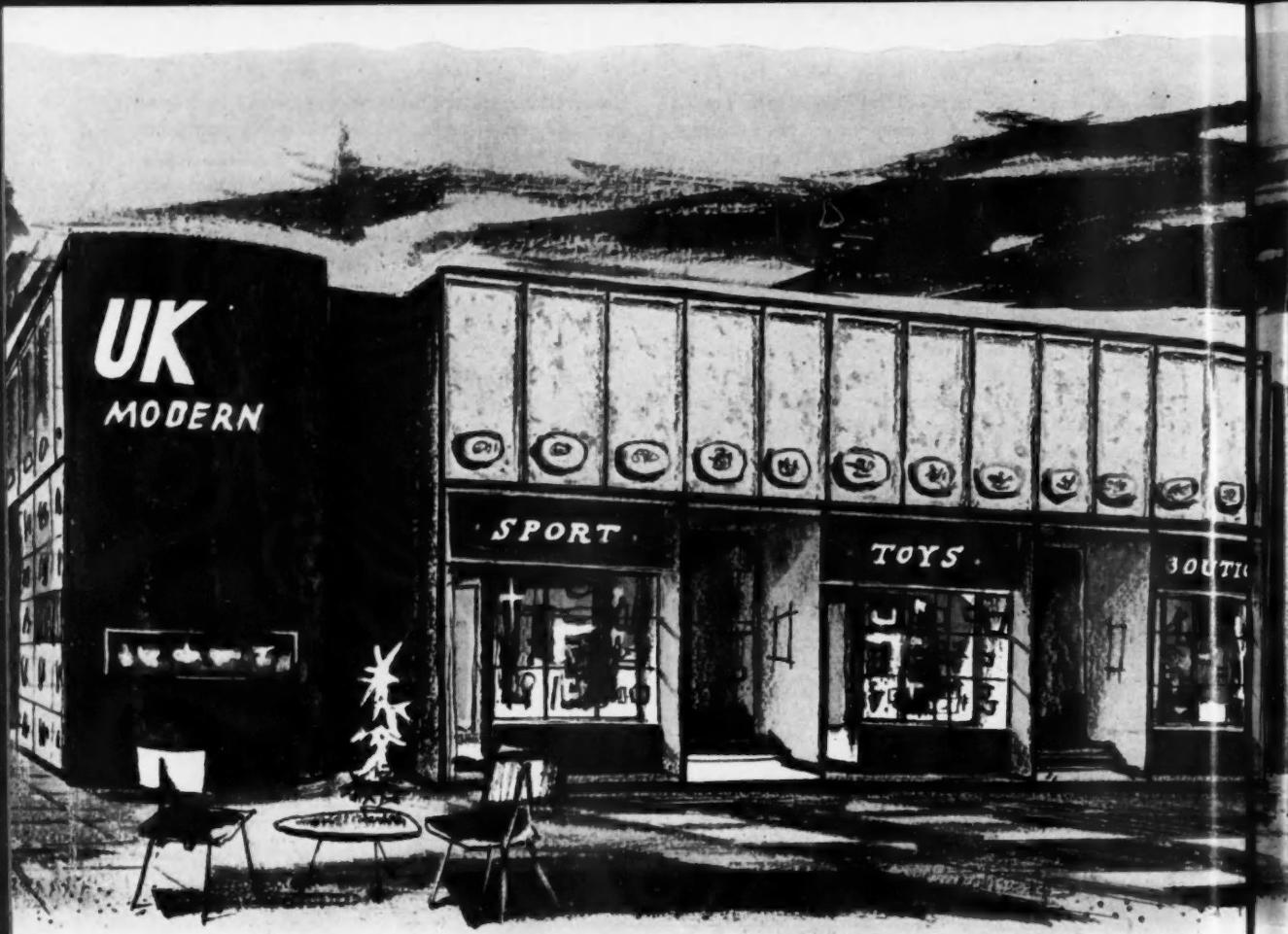
5 The new plane on its side seen below the standard 'American' model. The support for the heel of the cutter can be seen, as well as the screws for adjusting the width of the mouth of the plane.

small areas of contact with the frog. Provided that two of these are on the heel of the iron and near the corners, the plane will not 'chatter'.

The mouth of the new plane can be made as small as desired, and no craftsman of the old school will doubt the value of this when cleaning up awkward grained wood with a smoothing plane; or when taking off thick shavings with a jack, the back-iron being set well back - a thing which may occasionally have to be done with a smoothing plane also in emergency. The mouth of the normal 'American' type of plane can also be made small, but only at the expense of increasing

possible to proceed with the production version.

The wooden parts of the model and of the second prototype were made by the designer. In the model and first prototype an attempt was made to improve on the usual form of side adjustment lever, but this was not proceeded with. In the second prototype the usual form of this lever was used, and the shape of the handle, or tote, was modified to allow four fingers to go round it - a departure from the traditional form of closed tote. A jig and cutter were designed which enabled the curved and rounded parts of the tote all to be machined.



British designs for Canada

THE BOARD OF TRADE, in collaboration with the Council of Industrial Design, is again arranging a selective display of well-designed British consumer goods at this year's Canadian National Exhibition to be held at Toronto from August 27-September 11. Much valuable information was gained as a result of last year's display 'U K Modern' which showed that while traditional British designs are still popular in Canada a rapidly expanding market for modern designs has grown up during the past five years. Further evidence of this trend can be seen in the work of the Canadian National Industrial Design Council which is attracting interest through its Design Awards and other activities (see pages 38-39). The display has been arranged by Alec Heath while for economy the

'U K Modern' stand, designed by Neville and Mary Ward, will be used again this year with several modifications. The exhibits were selected by the Council of Industrial Design from 'Design Review' with the exception of women's accessories and textiles, selected by Rosemary Cooper, editor of VOGUE EXPORT, and sports goods and toys, chosen by the Council of Industrial Design in consultation with the trade associations concerned. Men's accessories and furnishing textiles were chosen separately by the Council's selection panel. A group of the exhibits to be shown at Toronto is illustrated here.

For our Canadian readers the numerals in brackets refer to the catalogue numbers.



Design: Number 68



ABOVE (20) Crystal table goblet with copper-wheel hand engraving: a sensitive combination of bold flowing shapes and delicate motifs.

Designer and Maker: Harold Gordon, Greywalls Studio, Forres, Morayshire, Scotland.



LEFT (32) 'Wild oats', a coupe-shaped plate from a dinner service made of bone china. The drawing of the grey and silver pattern is sensitive and restrained.

Designer: Victor Skellern.

Maker: Josiah Wedgwood & Sons Ltd.

Distributor: C. Cooper, J. Wedgwood & Sons Ltd, 863 Bay Street, Toronto.



ABOVE (59) This soup bowl and saucer is made by hand from fine white English earthenware. It is available in a variety of slip or ground-lay colours. *Designers:* David Real and P. J. Steele. *Maker:* Tillingbourne Pottery, Wootton, Dorking, Surrey.



ABOVE (85) The hint of Victorian decoration on the tongs is the only incongruous feature in the set of elegant bar implements. The handles are well modelled to fit the palm of the hand.

Maker: Sanders and Bowers Ltd.

Distributor: Panamex (Canada) Ltd, 414 Portage Road, Niagara Falls, Ontario.

LEFT (127, 128, 129) Copper plate lends a traditional quality and warm colour to the simple shapes of these kitchen utensils. The attachments are of nickel.

Maker: Elkington & Co Ltd.

Distributor: Cassidy's Ltd, Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg.

BELOW LEFT (245) 'Woodlands', a linen-printed furnishing fabric. The pattern of boldly drawn plants and leaves cleverly evokes the atmosphere of a wood in winter.

Designer: Peter Simpson.

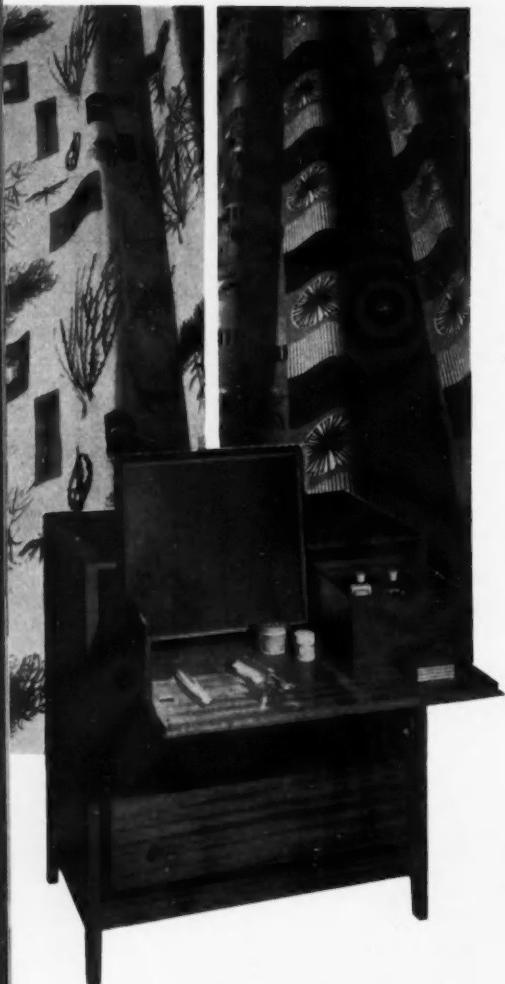
Maker: Donald Brothers Ltd.

Distributor: Edwin H. Porter, 238 Bloor Street West, Toronto.

BELOW RIGHT (304) One of a new range of furnishing fabrics. The lively pattern in this example is available in several bright colourways and is printed on rayon.

Maker: David Whitehead Ltd.

Distributors: T. Eaton Co Ltd, Robert Simpson Co Ltd and Dana Designs Ltd, 238 Bloor Street West, Toronto.



ABOVE (170) Secretaire dressing-table, part of a new range of modern bedroom furniture introduced at the 1954 'British Furniture Manufacturers' Exhibition'. Made of mahogany with a natural finish and ebonised decoration.

Designer: Ward & Austin.

Maker: Loughborough Cabinet Manufacturing Co, Granby Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire.

RIGHT (343) 'Adelphi' electric wall clock, an example of good dial design with clear numerals and simple, delicately shaped hands. The case is of moulded plastic.

Maker: Smiths English Clocks Ltd.

Distributor: Smiths English Clocks, PO Box 96, Station H, Toronto.

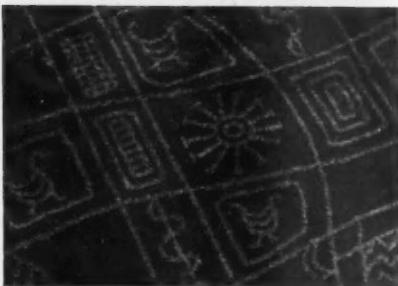


RIGHT (224) Wilton Jacquard woven carpet. The semi-abstract pattern is beige on a gold ground. Other colourways are available.

Designer: J. Feldman.

Maker: Old Bleach Linen Co.

Distributor: W. H. Bilborough & Co, 57 Bloor Street West, Toronto.



RIGHT (141) Combined suction cleaner and floor polisher made of aluminium alloy pressure die-castings and plastic mouldings. Finished in gold and maroon.

Designer: L. A. Grosbard.

Maker: Fillery's (Great Britain) Ltd.

Distributor: Fillery (Canada) Ltd, 334 Parliament Street, Toronto 2.



RIGHT (45) 'Wild Strawberry' teaware made of bone china. The delicately drawn pattern in muted red and green is printed by lithography on a white glaze.

Designer: Susie Cooper.

Maker: Susie Cooper China Ltd.

Distributor: T. Eaton Co Ltd, 238 Bloor Street West, Toronto.



RIGHT (509) Copper hipflask with a bayonet cap and chrome-finished ends. It is tin-plated inside and has a pigskin case.

Designer: A. Strauss.

Maker: L. S. Mayer (London) Ltd, 18-26 Essex Road, London N1.



RIGHT (359) 'Flight' travel case made of golden English coach hide, stiffened with fibre board. The lock and fittings are simple and well finished.

Designer: Walter B. Whiston.

Maker: S. E. Norris & Co Ltd, Shadwell Leather Works, Chadwell Heath, Dagenham, Essex.



MODERN TRANSFERS FOR POTTERY

THE THRILL AND PRIDE of launching a new technique is usually enough for the originating manufacturer: what his clients do with it is not his immediate problem. That attitude is common enough, and cases can be quoted where high claims for a revolutionary process have later been dishonoured by innocent misuse. The responsibility of acquiring through experiment and trial the fundamental capabilities of a new process surely rests with the inventor; and it is, therefore, the way in which he introduces his ideas to the maker that is so important. Among many similar, if less spectacular, cases one remembers the I C I stand at the BIF in 1953, where ARDIL and TERYLENE were launched not simply as new fibres for fabrics, but as materials presented through the specially commissioned work of leading textile designers. Through design the market can be encouraged not to copy what it is shown, but to take up the material or process for individual treatment within determined limits. Such a desire to see its invention well used has formed the policy behind the Johnson, Matthey screen-printed ceramic transfers, which are presented in the Potteries as a changing range of finished designs.

Johnson, Matthey felt that as the process was basically unfamiliar to its customers, the possibilities of the transfers could best be explored in its own design studio. Though unlike other forms of pottery decoration the transfers could be made to achieve strikingly similar results. This led to confusion in the early days. At that time, the well-established methods of decorating pottery were hand-painting, with its varying degrees of skill according to the quality of the ware and the demands of the market; engraved prints transferred

RIGHT A pattern which combines precise drawing with a fluidity that allows it to be used equally well on a variety of shapes. 'Thistledown', seven colours, 1954, designed by Colin Haxby for Simpsons (Potters) Ltd.



to the ware to produce an outline in one colour and afterwards finished with hand-applied enamels; and lithographic transfers, which were purchased fully prepared with all colours for direct application to the ware. In competition with these well-trusted processes it was essential for the new ceramic transfers to make a fresh impact on the industry, and it is significant that, during a comparatively short period on the market, this impact has been largely achieved through the use of modern designs. While still serving a section of the industry that has always demanded conventional patterns, particularly for bone china, the new transfers have gained further ground since 1952, when the demands of the American market for modern designs were first noticed by the industry in general. Johnson, Matthey had the foresight to exploit this trend by setting out to produce a range of modern



patterns which, for its first phase, culminated in the recent exhibition in Burslem.

For screen-printed transfers, as produced by Johnson, Matthey, the colours in the designer's pattern are first separated, and then individually printed through silk screens on to a transparent collodion film. The pattern is built up as each enamel colour is printed on the film. It is then transferred to the ware and afterwards fired. The transfers are of the 'water-slide' type and do not involve the use of size. The process has these main qualities: like lithographic transfers, a complete design can be fixed to the ware in one operation. Thick deposits of enamel are used in the transfers, giving rich colour effects and making the pattern stand out in relief. Each part of the



1 2

ABOVE The coupe shape gives the designer more freedom to arrange his pattern and the conventional idea of centre and border, seen surviving in 2, can be discarded. The success of the informally arranged pattern depends wholly on the designer's discernment: it could be taken to extremes like the modernistic patterns of the 'thirties. 1 is striking when seen with cutlery in a table setting; 2 has remarkable textured effects. 1 'Central Park', six colours, 1953, for T. G. Green & Co Ltd. 2 'Counterpoint', three colours, 1954. 3 'Star-drift', three colours, 1954, shown on American Castleton China shape.

1, 2, 3

LEFT Compared with lithography fewer colours are needed to convey a relatively complex design. The enamels can be printed as solid colour or broken up to give the effect of shading. 1 'Greenmantle', four colours, 1950, designed by A. Sayer Smith for Alfred Meakin (Tunstall) Ltd. 2 'Trefoil', two colours, 1953, designed by Colin Haxby. 3 'Thistledown', gold, 1953, designed by Neville Wynn for 'open stock'.



designer's pattern is printed clean and sharp, so that if it is designed specifically for the process the pattern will be accurately rendered.

The firm of Johnson, Matthey & Co Ltd was founded in the eighteenth century and has had long experience as gold refiners, precious metallurgists and chemical analysts. It first became known in the Potteries as a producer of liquid gold and gold powder, materials traditionally associated with decorative ware. In 1918 the firm opened a colour works for manufacturing enamels, largely used for glass and pottery, and it was as a logical development by means of laboratory experiments that the screen-printed transfer process was invented. The process was first introduced in 1938 for transferring patterns of enamel colours on to articles which could subsequently be

fired. Experience in the war of marking the calibrations on glass for instruments by transfer helped the firm to develop further the commercial applications of transfers for glass. The transfers were especially suitable where fine definition in printing was needed to render closely drawn decorative or descriptive designs.

It is only since the war that these transfers have been offered for use on pottery. It was seen that the transfers could best be presented in a range of finished designs, and a design studio at Wembley was organised under the direction of Neville Wynn, who joined the firm as consultant on colour and design. A full-time designer, Colin Haxby, was then chosen from a list of names recommended by the CoID.

In the early years the studio concentrated on transfers for china ware, and came up against a very strong demand for traditional patterns. Modern patterns were attempted, but the success was not spectacular until the wider market for earthenware was also tackled. The first, and natural, reaction of pottery manufacturers was to want something that enabled them to decorate their ware as effectively as other processes. Although Johnson, Matthey has set out to fulfil that objective, it was an uphill struggle to persuade manufacturers to judge the transfers on their intrinsic merits.

The early designs lacked colour shading. This rendered them essentially unlike lithography, but subsequent development produced new methods of shading without losing the quality of the solid deposit of colour, only to meet the criticism from customers that the process was getting too much like lithography. Whatever their relations are with other processes, screen-printed transfers have now established themselves. Aided by technical merits they have secured their position by a strong design policy, which means that distinguished and adventurous modern patterns are constantly being added to the range. A lead given by American buyers, perhaps the most important customers in Stoke-on-Trent, has been followed by Johnson, Matthey with original contributions. The firm's determination over this could be measured at the Burslem exhibition, where 100 modern patterns were shown, 29 of them on coupe-shaped ware.

M.F.

I, 2

ABOVE Economy in the use of enamels helps to reduce the cost of the transfer. These patterns have a distinctive originality of their own which makes them totally unlike lithographic transfers. 1 'Texture', two colours, 1953, designed by Colin Haxby. 2 'Wild Flowers', five colours, 1953, designed by Jacqueline Groag.

I, 2

LEFT Two early examples of transfer patterns. Both were exploring the new medium at a time before the more modern designs had been introduced. 1 'Lotus Land', five colours, 1949. 2 'Budding Bough', five colours, 1948. Designed by A. Sayer Smith for Pountney & Co Ltd.



The CATALOGUES SPEAK

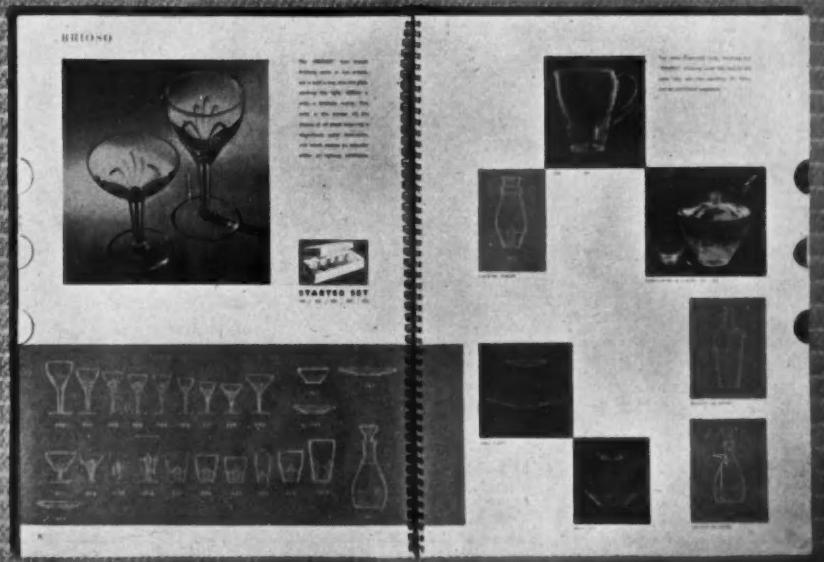
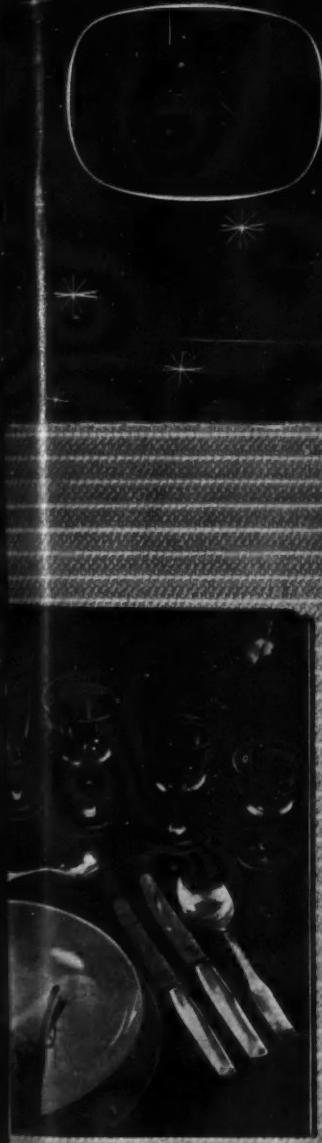
Paul Reilly

TRADE CATALOGUES speak volumes about their senders. Because much may depend in business on these first ambassadors, the British Federation of Master Printers and the Council of Industrial Design have jointly invited printers, advertising agents and business advertisers to submit examples of British catalogues for an exhibition to be held next October in London under the title 'A Hundred Good Catalogues'. It is hoped by this means to assemble a model collection of well-designed, well-edited and well-printed trade catalogues which will subsequently tour provincial industrial centres as a guide to the standards that, with a little care and imagination, all British firms could emulate.

The design and editing of trade catalogues is a much neglected side of business promotion, particularly in our older industries. In spite of a welcome increase in the number of good productions, British trade catalogues (along with a great deal of other promotional printing) are still often old-fashioned and parochial, clumsily put together, ill-printed, commonplace in thought and expression, employing hackneyed phrases and ancient blocks carried forward from generation to generation - the bird's-eye factory view, for instance, or venerable Edwardian craftsmen at their benches. In such cases, too, the photography is usually second-rate and heavily retouched, the pages overcrowded with competing points of interest, the pictures set askew as in a family scrap album or cutting one into the other, while on every



ABOVE Substantial, cloth-bound, loose-leaf catalogue from Gral-Glas-Werkstatten, Göppingen, Germany, with black face-boards and flame-red spine; sections identified by different-coloured printing and each preceded by a full-page prestige photograph; table sets and sizes clearly shown by photographs and line silhouettes; sans serif type throughout.



TOP Cover and double-page spread from recent prestige publication of N V Nederlandsche Glasfabriek, Leerdam, with, above, a double-page spread from a companion catalogue on table glass. Note spiral binding, prominent use on cover of the Leerdam symbol, excellence of photography, clarity of layout and easy identification of sizes; the various sections are differentiated by colour printing and by the marginal thumb indices. The design policy of Leerdam is controlled by A. D. Copier, the art director responsible for all design from the product to the presentation, hence the remarkably consistent 'company handwriting' throughout all Leerdam activities.



Romantic, mythical cover and a typical one designed by Taito Viinikka for Finland's Karhula-Iittala glassworks - a rather more modest and unusual production listing and illustrating an exciting range of original glass shapes.

Slim, glossy, white-covered prestige booklet issued by AB Orrefors Glasbruk, Sweden, 1962 in French and English for its class four-colour lacquerware plates opposite portraits of the artist in word and line.



Stylish dark case-bound catalogue from Richard Sennheiser Glassware, Wiesbaden, Germany, with no lead or cover beyond the revised S for Sennheiser, author of tableware well photographed, supported by occasional line silhouettes; typically Germanic in thorough, straightforward, neat serif typography but less British than its competition from Greh-Clear.



page appears some banal but treasured slogan or logotype. These idle productions often defeat the whole purpose of a catalogue - the clear statement or illustration of goods or services for sale or hire. Moreover they make a sorry showing alongside our foreign competition, fond as one may become of their old familiar faces.

The trouble is that catalogue design and production

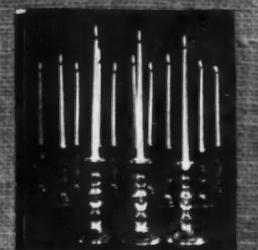
are too often treated as amateur occupations, something to fill in the spare time of a busy sales manager or to satisfy the personal creative urges of a board of directors or simply something to be turned over to a local jobbing printer who picks whatever founts and faces come easily to hand and as many old blocks as can be used again. Improvement will be slow until firms accept the point that a catalogue is an inescapable

Glass comes in this distinguished and ornate way on the first page. Below, regular, modern, clean-cut lettering is used for the rest of the catalogues. The first page is very well made, though the illustrations themselves are not particularly good.



MILK GLASS - JUG AND CUPS

Other reserved but distinguished Swedish production, the Gillaröd Glassworks' prestige booklet with descriptive text and full-page black and white illustrations, excellently printed by offset.



feature of their 'public face' and, together with their letter headings, a most important piece of company handwriting. Only then will professional advice be sought from a trained typographer or a competent advertising agent or a printer who is equipped to offer his clients a proper design service.

Following receipt of a catalogue from Holland and to illustrate the kind of foreign competition in this



By contrast, and in no unfriendly sense, we close these illustrations with two from an older country but from equally famous names in glass — Vallerysthal & Portieux and Baccarat. There is a lesson in these for our own glass manufacturers. Their tired paper covers, irregular hand-drawn lettering, inferior illustrations and poor layout are easily paralleled in this country and are no match for the modern-minded productions of up-and-coming competitors. Note, too, the connection between pride in promotion and pride in product; many of these French designs have an old-fashioned, boarding-house flavour.



field that one of our ancient craft-based industries is facing, we invited prominent table-glass manufacturers in six other countries to send us examples of their current catalogues. Not all are as good as the Dutch specimen but most reveal a high pride in product and presentation and all offer a challenge which, to judge from the British catalogues that we have seen, few of our own table-glass manufacturers can meet.

UNIT FURNITURE

BUILT-IN FURNITURE and

MODULAR CO-ORDINATION

Mark Hartland Thomas

Secretary, The Modular Society

Economy in production and flexibility in use are the main reasons why unit furniture is becoming steadily more popular. In this article Mr Hartland Thomas analyses the current trend and shows as an architect how dimensional co-ordination must be established before units can merge with built-in furniture and before built-in furniture itself can become part of a building.

FOR MANY OF US the original unit furniture was the sectional bookcase, the one with a rising glass front to each shelf. We were encouraged to buy one shelf at first and, as our library grew, to add others to stand on it and, when these reached a suitable height, to begin a second stack of shelves alongside.

These bookcases had all the essential characteristics of the unit idea for furniture. By making it easy to buy by instalments, they assisted the salesman. This is a feature that seems to be the dominant one in many

modern types of so-called unit furniture in which the pieces look better spaced apart than they do in juxtaposition.

The sectional bookcases were also made to consistent fixed dimensions so that the units would never fail to fit above, or alongside, each other, though purchased at different times and in different places. They were of simple cubical shape, since this is the easiest shape for stacking together, although it is not the only one. Just as one can build a house either with

cubical blocks of brick or stone, or out of a framework of metal or timber with infilling panels, so unit furniture can either be built up on the cubic system, like the sectional bookcase, or on a framework of posts and rails which carry individual shelves or cupboards.

Saving space

If I am right historically, the unit idea spread from bookcases to other kinds of shelving and thence to cupboards. At this point it came under the influence of the other idea – that of built-in furniture – which is so closely allied with it that one can hardly discuss them apart. Both are the result of the restriction of space in modern rooms, the need to use rooms for more than one purpose (bed-sitting-rooms or kitchen-dining-rooms) and a taste for compactness and plain surfaces to make these smaller rooms seem larger.

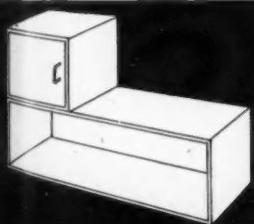
A group of unit furniture consisting of a dressing-table, bedhead with divan, shelving and wardrobe placed in the corner of a room really amounts in use to having most of it built in. It is not going to be changed about or added to, which facilities were part of the basic conception of unit furniture. Used like

this, and even more when shelving, framework and sectional seating are grouped in a promontory to make a partial division of a living-room, unit furniture almost seems to be trying to provide a substitute for built-in furniture, to avoid calling the builders in.

Kitchen units

In the kitchen the boundary between unit and built-in is still more uncertain. Some of the brands that one buys as units can be had cheaper without panelling at their backs and be built in. As in so many other aspects of design, provision for the kitchen is the most highly developed. Mechanical and plumbing units (cookers, refrigerators, washing machines, sinks) have been co-ordinated with shelving, cupboard and worktop units so that there is considerable choice in arrangement. There is not so much interchangeability between different manufacturers, but those making the carcass furniture work in with particular manufacturers of the specialised units (cookers, etc) so that, having chosen kitchen furniture of a particular brand, one has a fair choice of different cookers and refrigerators.

The thing that is lacking in kitchen furniture is a

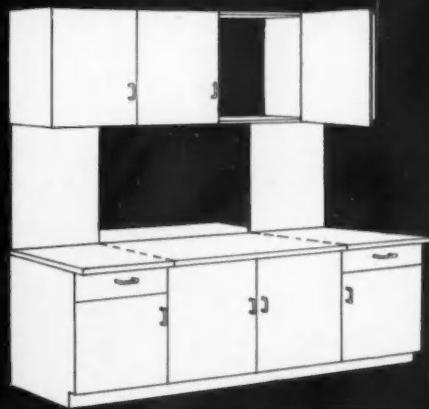
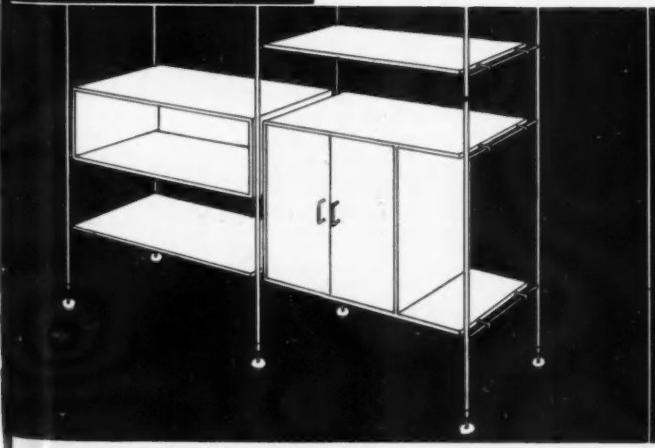
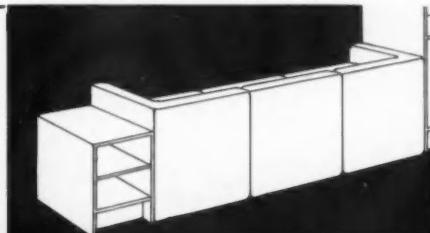


LEFT Cubical units.

RIGHT Units in a promontory for room division.

BELOW LEFT Framework units.

BELOW RIGHT Dresser between kitchen and dining-room with two-way cupboards and drawers, breakfast bar or hatch.



link with the dining-room. This would seem to be an obvious need, with our present tendency towards more or less combining the two rooms. What is wanted is to make the partition between a dining-room and kitchen consist entirely of built-in units, accessible from both sides with two-way drawers and cupboards, with or without a serving hatch or breakfast bar. This kind of thing is often purpose-made in modern houses, but it would be much better to buy ready-made units, capable of various arrangements in assembly, with all the details fully developed and proved. I am looking for this for a house that I am designing now and I do not expect to find it.

Furniture into wall

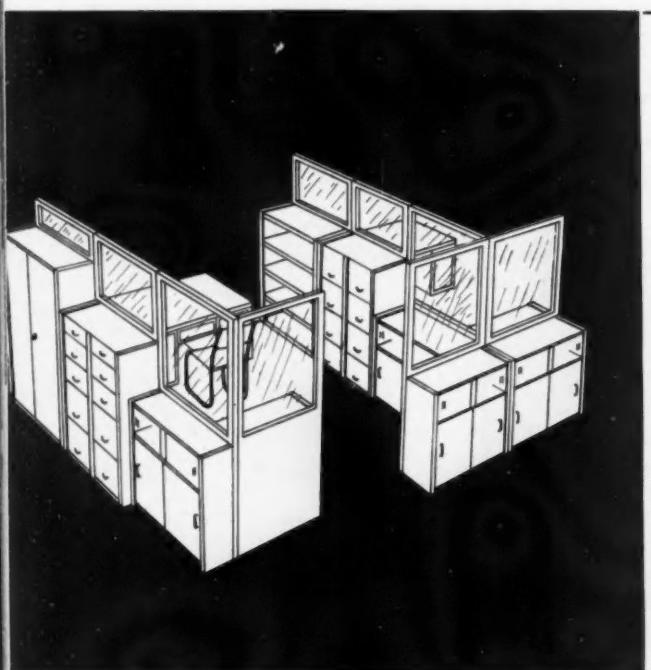
As soon as one begins to think of kitchen units back-to-back with dining-room units built into a partition, one touches the problem of dimensional co-ordination and the prospect of achieving this on a modular basis. The kitchen units and those for the dining-room, which have grown up separately, have now to be combined together. If they are also to make a partition, their dimensional system must agree with that of the building. The problem is similar if one wants to make,

as one so often does, the partition between two bedrooms consist entirely of wardrobes facing this way and that. Normally these are purpose-made and built-in, but they could be far better value for money if furniture manufacturers provided them as ready-made units for building-in. They cannot however enter this promising market until they have some certainty about the building dimensions into which their units are to fit.

When furniture manufacturers do enter the built-in market - the dimensions of buildings having been sufficiently standardised to allow them to do so - they will also find that unitary panels and framework for constructing partitions, and even external curtain walling, are well within their manufacturing capacity. Such things are not a very far cry from the unit framework for shelving or screens, which has already begun to appear and shows a trend.

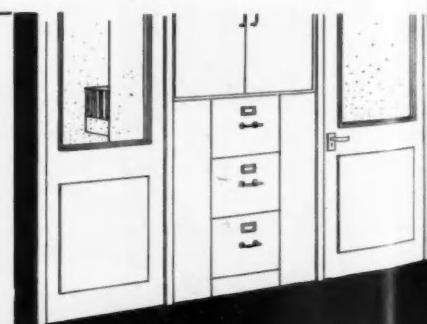
Dimensional co-ordination

Such a carry-over from unit furniture to unit partitioning already exists in office equipment, for often the same manufacturer who makes steel filing cabinets and cupboards, also makes steel and glass

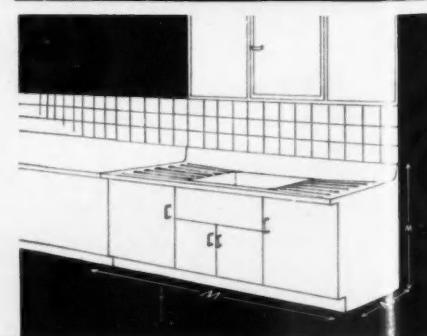


LEFT Office partitioning. Glass panels with steel frames of different sizes are attached to the various units of office furniture, bringing them all to a uniform height. Randall Products Ltd.

RIGHT Between two offices - glazed partitions, filing cabinets, cupboard and doors.



RIGHT Modular co-ordination applied to a range of kitchen units - the overall dimensions of each unit, where they relate to the products of other manufacturers, are marked 'M' and should be multiples of 4 inches. The subdivisions within the unit itself need not be modular.



movable partitions. At least one manufacturer already combines the two together, which is the next development, clearly foreshadowed at the new research laboratories at Welwyn for I C I Plastics Division. For this building the laboratory benching in 4-ft units was first developed and this was made the norm for the partition widths and for the bays of the main structure of the building. The whole plan is laid out on a 4-ft grid, with all services brought to every 4-ft square. Thus complete flexibility of rearrangement and subdivision of laboratory space is provided in *quanta* of 4 ft - the 4-ft squares of floor and ceiling, the 4-ft wide partitions and the 4-ft benches and cupboards. This is, of course, a very special building. Such flexibility of rearrangement is rarely needed: but a much greater amount of flexibility than is available now could be of great advantage in many buildings.

An example of the advantage of deriving the unit-size of built-in furniture from the plan-grid is provided by the Ministry of Education's development project, Wokingham School.* Shelving, wall benches, lockers and other furniture that has to stand against

a wall or fill an exact space are made to widths conforming to the 40-inch plan-grid. This enables them to be put where they are wanted, with a minimum of special construction or fitting on the job. To achieve this, both the building and the furniture must accept the discipline of the same dimensional grid.

Schools on a module

The question is whether it is possible to generalise the experience of the I C I Laboratory or the school at Wokingham. The laboratory might be discounted as a very costly provision for special needs (though that is how so much of our modern equipment originated), but the school is already more general than special. Many schools, requiring similar furniture, are now designed on a 40-inch grid and education authorities (pre-eminently Hertfordshire) are finding it economical to have their built-in furniture made in quantity to sizes in conformity with the grid. Manufacturers of school furniture might be expected to follow suit. One is impelled to urge all makers of unit furniture to manufacture to sizes in conformity with the several plan-grids now being used for buildings, but before doing so let us see to what extent they

* M O E Building Bulletin 8, H M S O.



ABOVE AND LEFT Pre-war sectional furniture showing various combinations of basic units. The pieces were derived from designs by the German architect F. Schuster and modified for production in this country by S. Chermayeff. Made by Plan Ltd.

RIGHT Some examples of pre-war 'Plan' furniture.





LEFT Sectional bookcases produced before the war. Width 2 ft 11 inches. Made by Minty Ltd.



ABOVE Unit furniture for the bedroom. Widths: cabinet, left, 3 ft; drawer and dressing cabinets, 2 ft 9 inches. Designed by Jacques Groag and first produced in 1954 by the Loughborough Cabinet Manufacturing Co.

RIGHT Shelf and cupboard units designed to stack one on another. Width 2 ft 9 inches. Designed by Berick Design Group and first made in 1953 by Beresford and Hicks.

BETWEEN Simple cubical units which serve the same purpose as built-in shelving - without having to call in the builders. Width 4 ft 5½ inches. Designed by Neil Morris and first made in 1950 by H. Morris & Co Ltd.



ABOVE Settee units consisting of two single-arm units, a single centre and a double centre unit without arms, and a complete corner unit also without arms. Width 1 ft 10½ inches. Designed by S. Hille & Co Ltd.

have already put their own dimensional house in order. Perhaps buildings should conform to an already well-established dimensional system for built-in furniture, if such exists.

As we saw in the two examples quoted, it is the width, or running dimension parallel with the wall, that matters most. The depth from front to back is not critical, unless floor coverings and finishes are also to be co-ordinated, as indeed they should be. Heights also are not so important, as most fitments stop short of room heights, though, of course, it would be useful to work to the 8-ft room height and allow definite sizes for wall finishes above the fitments.

Considering widths, one finds by looking through the examples in 'Design Review' that manufacturers of unit furniture mostly make to even feet in width, but that they subdivide also into half and quarter feet to give widths like 2 ft 6 inches and 2 ft 9 inches. These are less frequent than whole numbers of feet, to which some manufacturers conform exclusively.

British Standards

Turning from unit furniture for the sitting-room and bedroom to kitchen furniture, one finds that most manufacturers are working in multiples of 1 ft 9 inches. This is confirmed by British Standard 1195: 1948, which establishes the 1-ft 9-inch unit. Continuing with British Standards, there is BS 1292:1945 'Storage Fitments for Living Rooms and Bedrooms'. This confirms what we found in 'Design Review' - widths of even feet subdivided into half and quarter feet, but it goes further in subdivision than the manufacturers appear to go, by halving the unit again into eighths of a foot which introduces an awkward half inch.

So far it is already clear that there is little possibility of co-ordinating ranges of kitchen furniture built up on the 1-ft 9-inch unit with those of living-room units dimensioned primarily in even feet, but with occasional variations down to half, quarter and eighth feet. Turning to another British Standard, BS 1558:1949 'Office Equipment (Metal)', we find the widths of filing cabinets and plan cabinets given as the minimum *internal* widths, viz 12 inches and 15½ inches for the former and 42 inches for the latter. A 12-inch *internal* width is not going to conform with the increments of even feet found in living-room units, nor will the 42-inch *internal* width agree with the 1-ft 9-inch unit of kitchen furniture: in both cases the office furniture standard lays down as internal the width that is external for the others.

It may be objected that nobody wants to combine

ABOVE A units con cupboard Internal Designed David F by D. M.

RIGHT b ou sh described sense that whether, at ease dressing- robes, 2 6 inches. Stein and D. Mere

ABOVE Wardrobe Widths: and 3 ft; Robin D 1953 by

BELOW drainers with cab 7 ft. Fir & Co (L)



ABOVE An assembly of six ladder units consisting of 12 shelves, a cupboard unit and a bureau unit. Internal width: 2 ft 6 inches. Designed by A. Loebenstein and David Fowler. Produced in 1954 by D. Meredew Ltd.

RIGHT This illustration and the one below show examples which can be described as unit furniture in the sense that they can be pushed up together, though they seem more at ease when apart. Widths: dressing-chest, 2 ft 6 inches; wardrobes, 2 ft; chest of drawers, 2 ft 6 inches. Designed by A. Loebenstein and first made in 1952 by D. Meredew Ltd.

office furniture with that for the kitchen or living-room. Perhaps not very often, but that is not the point. But they are all intended to be worked into buildings: the components for constructing the building are, or could be, common to all of them. If the dimensions of buildings and of built-in furniture were to allow for general co-ordination and interchangeability, great economies would accrue to the purchaser, and manufacturers, who are at present confined to specialist markets, would find their opportunities expanding.



ABOVE Storage cabinet and two wardrobes of different sizes. Widths: wardrobes, 4 ft 6 inches and 3 ft; cabinet, 3 ft. Designed by Robin Day and first produced in 1953 by S. Hille & Co Ltd.

BELLOW Stainless-steel sink and drainers in one piece co-ordinated with cabinets underneath. Width: 7 ft. First made in 1948 by Wallis & Co (Long Eaton) Ltd.



ABOVE A typical example of highly developed kitchen furniture - far ahead of most examples for the bedroom and living-room. Widths in multiples of 1 ft 9 inches. Designed by F. G. Marshall and the firm's staff. First made in 1947 by C S A Industries Ltd.

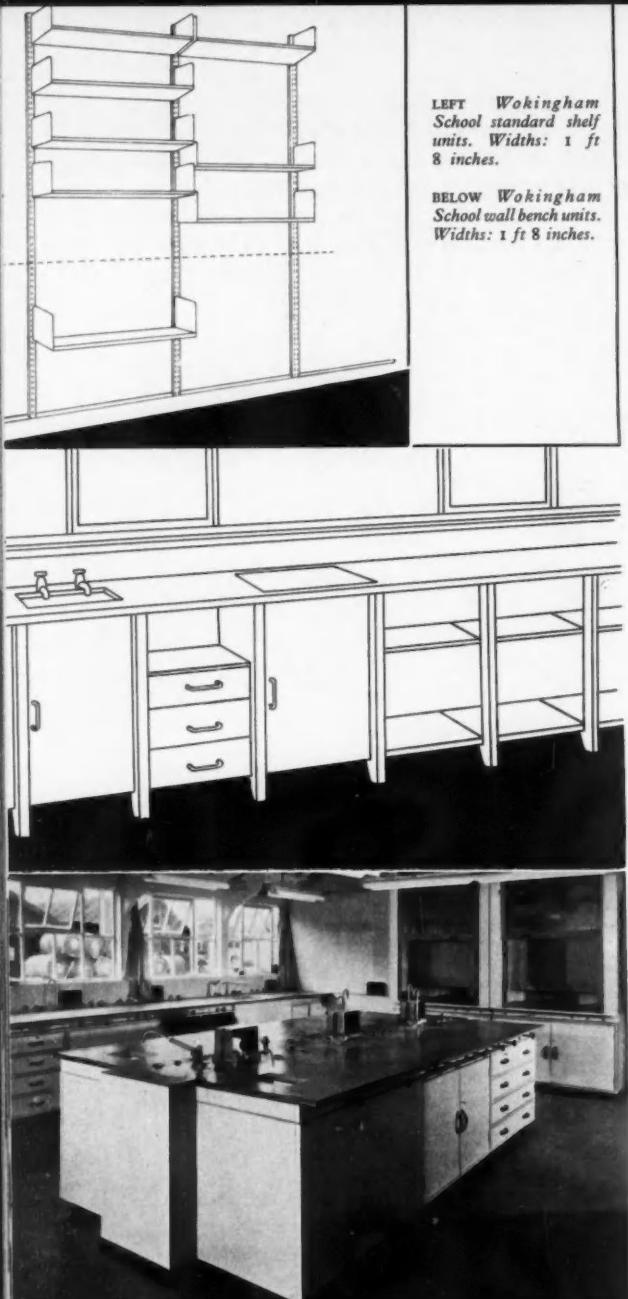
LEFT Kitchen units with cooker, sink and refrigerator co-ordinated. Various widths. First produced in 1946 by Eze Kitchens Ltd.

Agreeing on a module

The situation in regard to standard and customary dimensions in unit furniture is the same as that at present existing in the several parts of the building industry: standardisation has gone far in the different branches, but co-ordination between them does not exist. This piecemeal standardisation has achieved remarkable economies in manufacture, but lack of co-ordination between the different trades bars us from realising similar economies in assembly. It is at this point that modular co-ordination offers a solution.

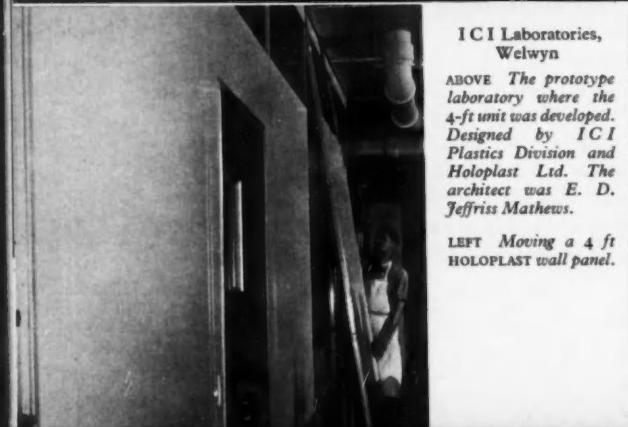
Since unit or built-in furniture is intended for fitting into buildings, it is reasonable to treat it for this discussion as a branch of the building industry. In this industry we have a host of manufacturers of various components - doors, windows, structural frames, panelling, bricks, glass and so on - all of whom have their standard or customary sizes which need co-ordination one with another. The task of co-ordinating them piecemeal is proving to be interminable, but if some neutral system of dimensions can be set up as a





LEFT *Wokingham School standard shelf units. Widths: 1 ft 8 inches.*

BETWEEN *Wokingham School wall bench units. Widths: 1 ft 8 inches.*



ICI Laboratories, Welwyn

ABOVE *The prototype laboratory where the 4-ft unit was developed. Designed by ICI Plastics Division and Holoplast Ltd. The architect was E. D. Jeffress Matthews.*

LEFT *Moving a 4 ft HOLOPLAST wall panel.*

magnet to influence all the separate discussions and negotiations, progress can be made and, as it is made, it can be assessed in relation to the norm.

Simple formula

The establishment of the 4-inch module for buildings (and by derivation for built-in furniture) seeks to do this. One would like to say to manufacturers, "Make your component to overall dimensions of whole multiples of 4 inches with due allowance (plus or minus) for joint or joining members", and to architects, "If you want to use modular components for a building or any part of it, lay down your main dimensions in 4-inch multiples at the points where one manufacturer's component meets another's". The formula is as simple as that and I commend it to manufacturers of built-in furniture. The simplicity of statement covers an immense intricacy in the details of working it out, but this we must face, encouraged by the fact that other industries (such as the automobile industry) successfully tackle even more intricate problems of dimensional co-ordination.

I am glad to be able to report that the intricacies of the problem are now being worked upon. The Modular Society is engaged upon the preliminary work for a 'Modular Catalogue' of components already available that meet the conditions mentioned in the previous paragraph. There is every reason why the catalogue should, by the natural extension from furniture to building outlined in this article, also contain modular units of built-in furniture.

Systematic flexibility

Some readers may ask why 4 inches? The basic module, which is the smallest increment recognised in the system and as distinct from multiples of it like 3 ft, 3 ft 4 inches or 4 ft used as plan-grid sizes, needs to be of this order of magnitude, after the advantages of simplification have been balanced against those of flexibility. It needs to be a whole number of inches for convenience in arithmetic and to multiply into whole numbers of feet for the same reason and because many things (as we saw with unit furniture, above) are already made in whole numbers of feet.

These considerations reduce the choice to either 3 inches or 4 inches, for they rule out 5 and 7, whilst 2, 6, 8 and 9 are a submultiple and multiples of the first two. The preference for 4 rather than 3 is because 4 is already better-established. The American modular system, officially recognised by the American Institute of Architects and the American Standards

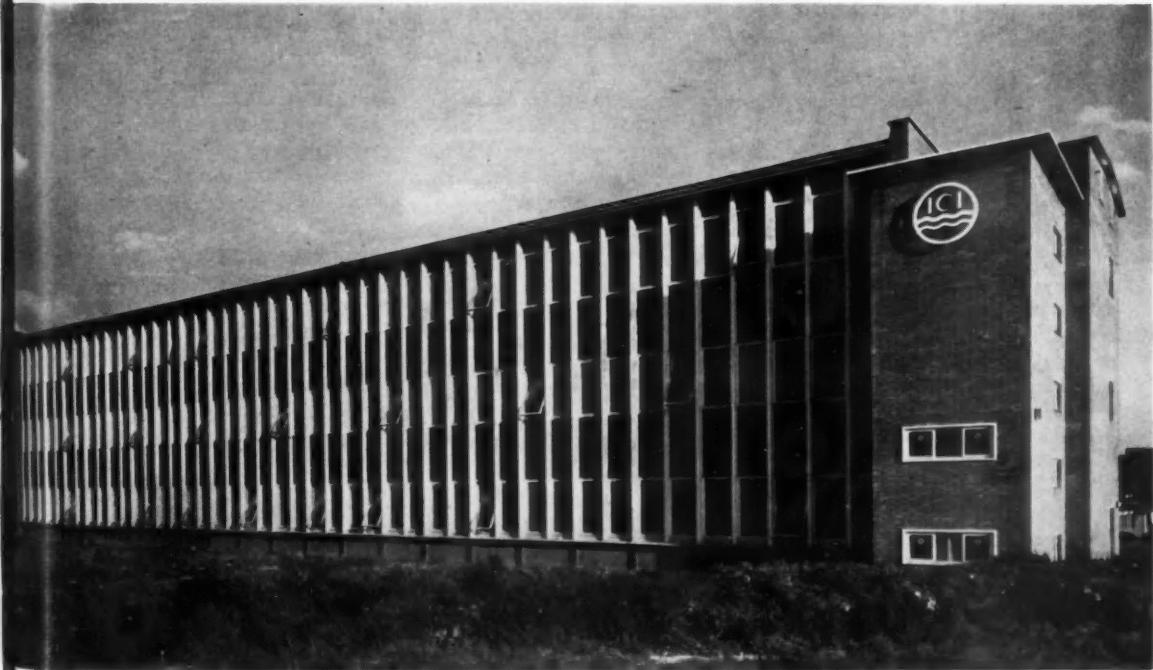
Association, is based on the 4-inch module and has 20 years' research and development behind it. This is matched by the use of the (nearly) equivalent 10-cm module in metric countries. Lastly, in Britain the majority of modular buildings are designed on plan-grids that are multiples of 4 inches, whilst the adoption of a 3-inch module would rule out some of the most highly developed modular work which employs the 40-inch planning grid. In the light of this and similar reasoning the Modular Society announced in May of this year that it had adopted the 4-inch module.

There remains one question that may arise in the minds of manufacturers and their designers, 'Will a 4-inch module, with its 4-inch flexibility, provide sufficient co-ordination between components?' It is as far as one can reasonably expect to go in co-ordination. It would be too much to ask everybody to adhere to a single human-scale plan-grid. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government prefers a 3-ft grid, the Ministry of Education and some manufacturers of export houses 3 ft 4 inches; many others (like the ICI Laboratories mentioned) work to 4 ft, factories

and other large buildings are often laid out in multiples of these, such as 10 ft, 12 ft or 20 ft. This is the kind of range of multiples of 4 inches that the furniture designer should expect to accommodate – not every step in a 4-inch gradation. The process of simplification is aided by the fact that the things we use already have an approximate size or order of magnitude: for example, the alternative widths for a modular doorway limit themselves to 2 ft, 2 ft 4 inches and 2 ft 8 inches. If manufacturers of unit furniture, whether for office, kitchen, bedroom or living-room, were to work to one or more of three modular ranges of overall widths – viz 1 ft 8 inches, 3 ft 4 inches, 5 ft; 2 ft, 4 ft, 6 ft, 8 ft; 3 ft, 6 ft, 9 ft – they would find new outlets for their products in the equipment of buildings, as the modular method makes headway in architecture.

I have laid the emphasis upon width and said little about the other two dimensions. The guiding rule is – overall size in even multiples of 4 inches where another manufacturer's product is to be met, and within the overall size thus defined the module can be disregarded.

General view of the ICI laboratories showing the 4-ft bays which conform to the 4-ft laboratory units.



Competition for car design

THE FACT THAT THE annual competition "to stimulate improvements in design of bodywork" organised by the Institute of British Carriage and Automobile Manufacturers is termed a 'Drawing Competition' seems strange considering that the requirements are those of a designer rather than a draughtsman. It also comes as



Roy D. Haynes, winner of the competition for a long-distance touring saloon where emphasis is placed on amenities for Continental touring, and ample accommodation is provided for luggage within the body. Prize: £50. In this article E. G. M. Wilkes comments on the designs illustrated here.

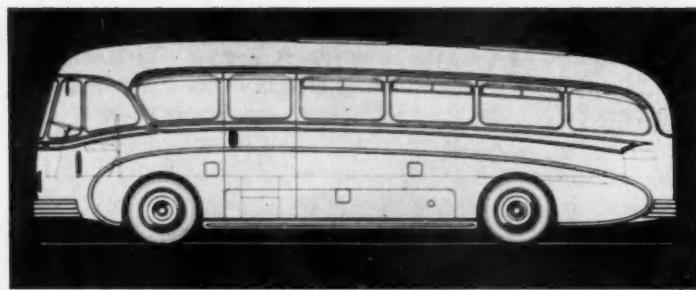
with the design of, say, a cheap mass-produced small car did not occur. And yet in spite of this, the results can only be described as mediocre.

the car as a whole has a slightly out-of-date appearance.

Not enough can be seen of the sports saloon to appreciate its true appearance, but in both the winning motor-car designs and in the luxury coaches there is evidence of the draughtsman's and coachbuilder's tendency to style a body by side elevation lines rather than by visualising the car in perspective. The coach designs, in particular, are timid reproductions of existing styles.

If the motor industry is as short of designers as would appear to be the case, then it can only have itself to blame. The engineering departments are full of specialists, more often than not controlled by men who are themselves specialists. Each specialist is only interested in his own little world.

It is extremely unlikely that a well-designed car will materialise merely as a result of being thrown back and forth between draughtsman, stylist, specialist engineers and directors. If it does materialise then it will be in spite of these difficulties rather than because of teamwork. Somewhere there must be a designer or, with



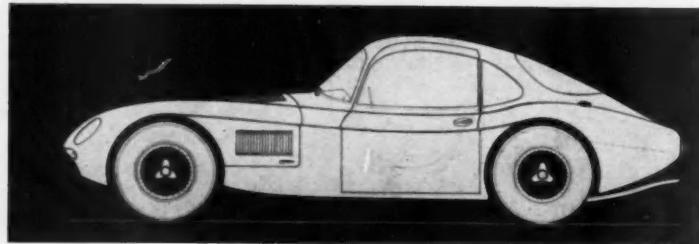
K. A. G. Hunt, joint winner of the competition for a full-fronted single-deck luxury coach of monocque construction, suitable for general use by a British coach operator. Overall dimensions to be 30 ft long by 8 ft wide. Prize: £56 5s.

a surprise to learn that the system of marking regards 'originality' and 'design' as of equal value, and that 'design' and 'practicability' are separate considerations. Since many modern cars bear visual evidence of the same confused idea of design, one begins to wonder whether the industry, in putting too much faith in specialists, has lost the art of designing.

The competitions for the design of a touring saloon and a luxury coach were open to persons of British nationality without age limit. Only the competition for a sports saloon was limited to persons under 21 years of age. Furthermore, the types of vehicles chosen, and the terms of reference, allowed plenty of scope. The competition may have been intended to appeal to the coach-building industry, and certainly the more exacting problems connected

One is at once impressed by the ability of the winner of the touring saloon class. There can be no denying that he has the qualifications of a designer. But in appearance the car has all the characteristics of the less satisfactory coachbuilders' efforts of recent years. Certainly the use of a gas turbine at the rear of the car is looking ahead some years, and yet

David M. Morris, winner of the competition for a two-door, two-seater enclosed car of racing type on a wheelbase not exceeding 8 ft 3 inches. Prize: £20.



Airflow design

THE CULT OF STREAMLINING has gone to ridiculous extremes, but it is equally ridiculous to deplore its application to static objects merely on the score that they do not move and therefore do not need a form which passes easily through air. A suspension bridge does not move through space, yet lack of attention to the effects of airflow on such a construction can lead to disaster such as the collapse of the 2,800-ft span bridge at Tacoma Narrows. The fact is that motionless objects in a stream of air are as likely to need some thought paid to their adaptation to the airflow as objects that are impelled through air at high speed. This does not mean, of course, that every ash-tray needs its design modified by a wind-tunnel test just because a Jamaican planter may one day leave one on a veranda during a hurricane; but it does mean that aerodynamic techniques may offer a fresh approach to old problems as well as to new.

An informative booklet on The Industrial Application of Aerodynamic Techniques* has been published describing some industrial problems dealt with by the applica-



Two railway signalling lamps: the model on the right was designed after testing in a wind-tunnel. Designed and made by Lamp Manufacturing & Railway Supplies Ltd.

tion of aerodynamic principles. Many of the problems are of interest to engineers and architects, such as the effect of wind pressures on outdoor structures, the mitigation of nuisance from industrial chimney stacks or the control of ventilation, storage and drying by achieving a correct distribution of an air-stream. Most designers are probably already aware of the work done on cars, trains or ship superstructures, which is here only indicated briefly. There is, however, a glimpse of the wider field of interest to designers when smaller

static objects are considered; an investigation made into railway indicator lamps resulted in completely new designs. It is true these lamps were obviously suitable for a wind-tunnel test. But no designer can look at the illustrations of the lamps without asking himself whether other products might not also be transformed if thought were given to the currents of air that blow upon them.

The booklet concludes with a short description of wind-tunnels and of the measuring techniques and instruments used.

present-day complications, a powerful but very small team of no more than three designers per model.

A few really competent designers working side by side and not afraid to do their own layout work and with the responsibility for making their own decisions will usually agree as a team without any difficulty. But to spread the design responsibility amongst a large number of specialists and heads of departments, each sitting in his office in grand isolation, is making very hard work of design.

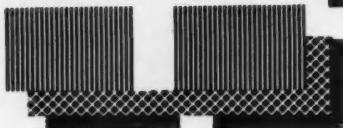
But designers do not flow in a steady stream from the drawing office. A great many draughtsmen

become first-rate specialist engineers, but only a small number has the wider knowledge, creative ability and aesthetic perception necessary for the designer. Even if they have these qualities they soon find themselves bogged down in the styling department or other specialist department. In fact, most styling departments are no answer to the problem, as they are in reality only another specialist bottleneck.

Thus it certainly seems a shortsighted policy on the part of the industry to spend such vast sums of money on test tracks, testing equipment, and research, and practically

nothing on training designers. Although it is true that to some extent good designers are born rather than made, a very great deal could be done to stimulate interest, widen knowledge, and improve experience. However, until the industry decides that it wants designers and devises a means of using them efficiently, design matters will continue to be referred to committees.

The strange thing is that the very existence of the above competition is a feeble admission that there is such a thing as design as distinct from draughtsmanship or specialist technical knowledge. E. G. M. WILKES



CANADA

Merit Awards 1954

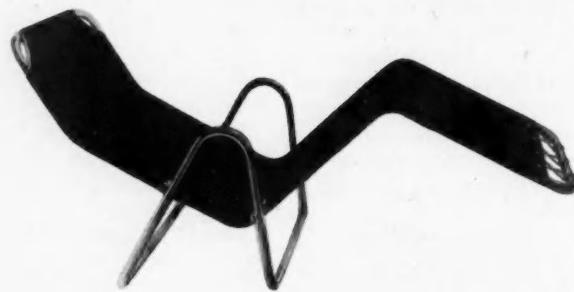
THE SECOND OF THE Design Merit Award contests, established last year by the National Industrial Design Council of Canada, was held recently at the NIDC Design Centre in Ottawa. These annual contests, a full account of which was given last year in DESIGN (August 1953 pages 15-18), form part of an extensive programme to encourage higher design standards in Canadian manufactured goods. From over 350 entries submitted through the 'Design Index' (roughly equivalent to the CoID 'Design Review') 96 were selected for awards by a panel of judges consisting of the chairman of the NIDC, two manufacturers, an architectural school director and a past president of the Canadian Association of Consumers.

Manufacturers and retailers of winning designs are encouraged to make use of the Merit Award labels in their advertising and displays, so that the consumer knows he will be buying a product which has "been judged outstanding for its form, function, originality, good value and consumer acceptance". The designs have also been promoted through a series of exhibitions, arranged by the NIDC, at the Design Centre, as well as in department stores in Toronto, Montreal and other cities.

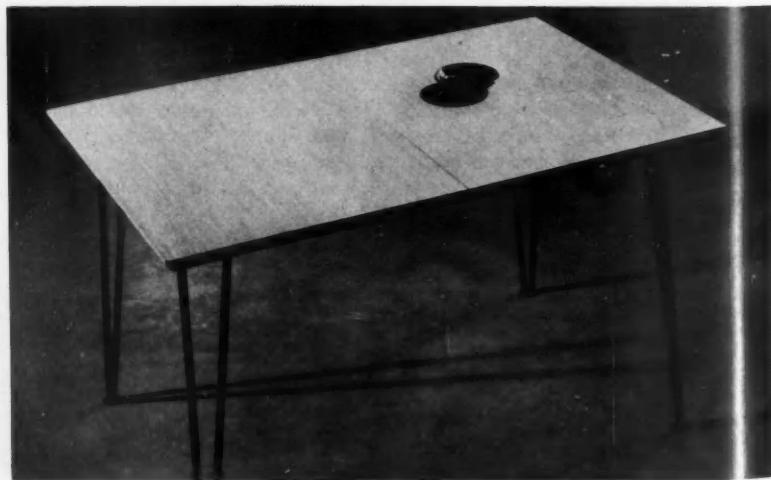
This growing emphasis on modern design is a striking pointer to market trends in Canada. In this respect British exporters will need to watch carefully the reactions to the prestige display of British goods at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto later this month. It is worth comparing some of the British exhibits (see pages 18-20) with the following selection of Canadian Design Merit Award winners.



ABOVE Birch and teak sideboard with brushed brass fittings. Note the slight projection of the drawer cabinet. Designer: Russell H. Spanner. Maker: Spanner Products Ltd.



ABOVE Reclining chair for the garden. Made of aluminium alloy tubing with nylon covering in royal blue, green, red or gold. Designer: Julien Hébert. Maker: Sigmund Warner Ltd.





ABOVE Melamine plastic serving platter and bowl obtainable in various colours. Staff design. Maker: Maple Leaf Plastics Ltd.



LEFT Television receiver with a birch cabinet fitted with legs. Staff design. Maker: Addison Industries Ltd.

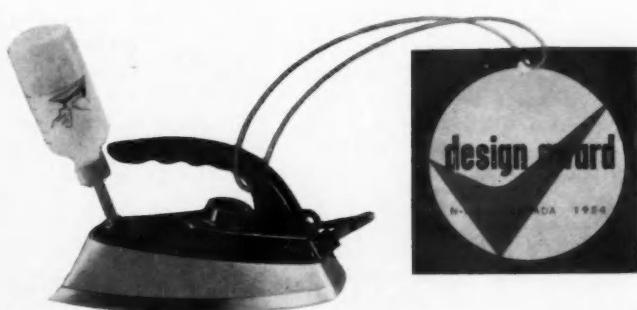


ABOVE Lounge chair with framework of black iron and expanded metal. The seat is covered with striped ticking. Designer: George Boake. Maker: Metalsmith's Co Ltd.



ABOVE Interchangeable sofa and table units in birch. Seats upholstered with foam rubber. Staff design. Maker: Snyder's Ltd.

LEFT Dining-table with a plastic top and black iron legs. Designer: Alban P. Knechtel. Maker: Knechtel Kitchen Kabinet Ltd.



ABOVE Automatic steam and dry iron with filler. Weight 2½ lb. Designers: Laurie G. McIntosh and B. H. Pickard. Maker: Steam Electric Products Ltd.

ABOVE One of the labels which can be used in advertising and displays to promote sales of award-winning products.



LEFT Living-room. Dark bubinga and light avordire veneers used on walls and furniture. Carpet is rich red; tiles and curtains blue-grey.

BELOW The shape is similar to standard Rollalong models though it is slightly higher and the position of the windows is different. Stronger chassis, large tyres and 'dolly' are necessary to support the extra weight. Porch is collapsible. Finish is blue and white.



Showman's modern

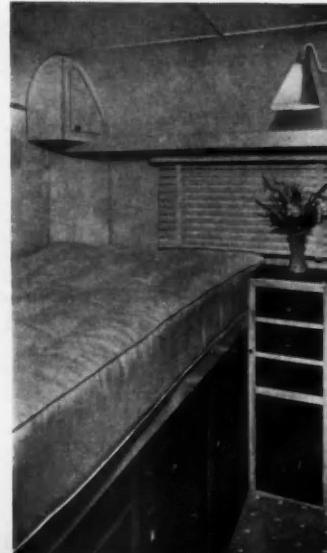
MANY OF THE LARGER caravan manufacturers produce special-purpose caravans for exhibitions, banks, offices, libraries, etc. These are usually built within standard production shells modified to some extent to suit special requirements, yet the quality of design, construction and finish is often in advance of caravans produced for the general market. The reasons for this are largely cost - the customer is willing to pay more for his special requirements. The manufacturer may also feel that with an assured market for his product he can take a bold and more progressive line whereas normally he would feel it wiser to play safe. With the caravan illustrated here, produced specially by Roll-along Ltd for a manager of Bertram Mills Circus, the customer himself exercised a beneficial influence by specifying many of the furnishings, fittings and materials. That the result falls short of perfection in such things as the living-room carpet, the fire and the gas lighting fittings is largely due to the lack of suitable

alternatives on the market - the owner complained that he could not find a modern carpet in the quality he required. However, the imaginative use of coloured plastic, of

decorative woods and tiles and the careful attention to detail both inside and out, create a standard of design much needed in equivalent commercial products.

J.E.B.

BELOW Bedroom at rear. Square sycamore panels on walls. Ample storage space under bed can also be used as child's bunk and is lit by separate window. Closet is through door on right. Venetian blinds throughout are decorative and give privacy.



BELOW Centre kitchen. Colourful use of red and primrose FORMICA on walls and furniture. Bath is fitted under trapdoor in floor. Water is heated by fire in living-room.



NEWS

British goods in Denmark

A British trade fair and exhibition will be held at Copenhagen from Thursday, September 29-Sunday, October 16, 1955. Her Majesty the Queen and His Majesty the King of Denmark have graciously agreed to grant their patronage to the exhibition, which will also have the full support of the British and Danish Governments. Like the British exhibitions in 1932 and 1948, the last of which attracted over a million visitors, it will be organised by the British Import Union of Denmark in collaboration with the Federation of British Industries.

In a period of growing competition, the trade fair and exhibition will provide a timely opportunity for British manufacturers to show Denmark - and neighbouring countries - the latest designs in both capital and consumer goods, ranging from heavy engineering and transport to textiles, leatherware and pottery.

The exhibition will be held in Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens and in the Forum, where the existing buildings will be supplemented by British-made temporary structures. John Lansdell has been appointed co-ordinating designer, assisted by two Danish architects, Simon Henningsen (for the Tivoli Gardens) and O. Gundlach-Pedersen (for the Forum).

Travelling fellowships

Two Scottish wool textile designers have been awarded travelling fellowships by the International Wool Secretariat. The designers, Robert Waugh of Robert Noble & Co Ltd and John Scott of Arthur Bell (Scotch Tweeds) Ltd, will visit several of the main cultural and textile centres in Europe including Paris, Lyons, Rome, Florence, Milan, Biella, Zürich, Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Gothenburg. The object of the visits will be to give designers, who have spent some years in the mills, an opportunity to gain experience of design trends in other countries. Selection for the awards was made by the IWS in conjunction with the National Association of Scottish Woollen Manufacturers.

Book design

The National Book League has announced the titles of 86 books chosen out of more than 650 submitted for the 1954 exhibition of book design to be held at 7 Albemarle Street during September. Sets of these books will be sent for exhibition to Holland, South Africa and Canada by the British Council. The selectors - James Shand (Shenval Press), David Bland (Faber and Faber) and Hugh Williamson (Oxford University Press) - have also chosen 68 book jackets for display. Included in the exhibition will be a special show of costly books.

Silver exhibition

An exhibition of modern silver, organised by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, is now on show at the Sheffield City Museum until August 11. The choice of exhibits is a reflection of the changes which are at present taking place in the industry. Private patronage is giving way to commissions by large firms and civic authorities with the



Glass industry's headquarters

The Glass Manufacturers' Federation has opened new headquarters at 19 Portland Place, a house which still retains many excellent examples of James Adam decoration. It has been converted into conference rooms, a library, writing-room, exhibition galleries and offices, in a style which though essentially modern has been made to harmonise in all but a few exceptions with the period character of the house. The illustration shows the members' room which, with the other ground- and first-floor rooms, were designed by Lady Casson as co-ordinating designer working with students of the Royal College of Art. The showroom and exhibition rooms in the basement were designed by Cyril Weeden and Lionel S. Rider. The premises were opened by Henry Strauss, M P, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade.

result that less domestic and more ceremonial silver is being produced.

After the exhibition closes at Sheffield it will be moved to the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, until the end of September and will later be shown at the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery and at the Tea Centre in London.

Trailer coupling

A coupling and towing bracket can often be an unsightly attachment at the rear of a motor-car. This example, produced by C. P. Witter Ltd, shows how it can be designed to appear an integral part of the rear bumper. New designs have been produced in consultation with several motor manufacturers and the coupling shown incorporates rubber shock-absorbing bushes and a chromium-finished cover as a protection against the greasy ball. It is mounted on a towing bracket which distributes the load over the underframe of this car which is of integral construction.



Handwriting exhibition

A small private exhibition of handwriting arranged by Alfred Fairbank was held recently at the Treasury. The discipline in design achieved by some children of eight was remarkable and there were many more advanced examples of the Chancery hand. As the Treasury is not normally an exhibition centre this show created a good deal of interest.

Furniture conference

A conference on contemporary trends in furniture production will be held at Harrogate on October 16-17. The principal speakers will be Edward H. Pinto, Ernest Race and A. S. A. Wooster. The conference is being organised by the Yorkshire Council for Further Education in conjunction with the Northern Furniture Manufacturers' Association. Full details can be obtained from the Council's Secretary, 35 Park Square, Leeds 1.

RSA bursaries

The Royal Society of Arts has announced the particulars of the 1954 Industrial Art Bursaries Competition. This will follow on the same lines as the 1953 competition and will include 11 of last year's 13 sections, the men's wear fabrics and the PVC plastic sheeting sections being excluded. A section on laminated plastics will be introduced again this year and in addition there will be a new section on women's fashion wear with awards to be made under the Bianca Mosca Memorial Trust. Bursaries of £150 each will be offered in each of the

sections with three bursaries in the dress textiles section. The Sir Frank Warner Memorial Medal will also be awarded for the best design in the set tests in the furnishing textiles, dress textiles or carpet sections if the entries are of sufficient merit.

British subjects between the ages of 17 and 30 are eligible for the competition and with the exception of the domestic gas and solid-fuel-burning sections and the foot-wear section, candidates must be full-time or part-time students at a recognised art or technical school. Full details and entry forms can be obtained from the Secretary, RSA, John Adam Street, London WC2.

Institute's name

The Incorporated Institute of British Decorators has recently extended its name to the Incorporated Institute of British Decorators and Interior Designers. The syllabus of the associateship examinations has been widened to include a special examination for students desiring to qualify as interior designers.

Museum appeal

In the Geffrye Museum, Shoreditch, an Edwardian room is being added to the series of period rooms dating from 1600 to the present day. The Curator is anxious to trace suitable pieces of furniture and accessories by such designers as Barnsley, Voysey, Mackintosh, etc., which would fit into a small bay representing a living-room of about 1905. She would be very grateful for suggestions which might lead to the loan or purchase of suitable pieces.

Private dining-room

The photograph shows the lounge area in the private dining-room which has been designed for the managing director of Hoover Ltd in the firm's factory at Perivale. The new room is situated at one end of the existing kitchen and consequently involved problems of insulation from both sound and smell. Enough money was available to allow the use of good quality fittings and this is reflected in the grey, imitation leather panelled wall and the special built-in radio and clock fitting. RACE chairs and a settee were chosen for this area and were supplied by the general contractor, Heal's Contracts Ltd. The room was designed by John Lunn and Mary de Saulles in conjunction with the architects to the factory, Wallis, Gilbert and Partners.



LETTERS

Disappointing pottery

SIR: I was very interested to see in THE TIMES of April 6 an article on 'Opportunities in United States Markets', as it bore out something that impressed me on my first post-war visit to the United States in 1951. The writer says: "There are, however, a number of industries which lose business because of poor styling. China and earthenware have not increased their share of the market as production rose, and one of the reasons is believed to be their reliance on traditional designs, and their reluctance to introduce new."

The displays of British pottery that I saw in the USA in 1951 were, I thought, very disappointing. Even today, after more than a twelvemonth of opportunity to try out new patterns on the home market, the selection of decorated tableware is still very poor when it is compared with the kind of furniture, fabrics and carpets that we can produce in this country. It seems to me, as it did to the writer of the article in THE TIMES, that we are not making enough effort to gain a share of the market that other countries seem to think worth competing for. Is there not scope here for the Council of Industrial Design to help to remedy this situation? Could not an exhibition of some of the best contemporary designs now being produced in the USA, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Italy and other countries be staged at Stoke-on-Trent? It would bring home to the design departments of our own potteries what their goods have to compete with in the export markets of the world.

ANTHONY S. HEAL
Managing Director
Heal & Son Ltd
193-9 Tottenham Court Road
London W1

We asked the Director of the British Pottery Manufacturers' Federation for his views on Mr Heal's letter. They are as follows:

SIR: Mr Heal complains of the poor styling of British china and earthenware, basing his opinions upon a visit which he paid to the United States in 1951, and corroborating them with an extract from an article published in THE TIMES on April 6 last.

I think that upon reflection Mr Heal would incline to the view that a judgment based upon 1951 is not particularly relevant to 1954. In 1951, as he notices in a later part of his letter, the home market was still closed to the sale of decorated china and earthenware; and it should be added also that 1951 was the year of peak demand since the war, when pottery manufacturers had the greatest difficulty in fulfilling the demands for their products that came from most overseas markets.

It would be reasonable to assert that there are few industries which travel their export markets more thoroughly than the pottery industry. This statement applies particularly to the United States and Canada, which are regularly visited by the principals of pottery factories as well as by their art directors and others working on their behalf. The industry is, therefore, well aware of the needs and requirements of its North American customers. Their travels are complemented by the visits that are paid to the potteries by buyers from the United States and Canada.

I do not wish what I have written to be understood as the reflection of a complacent

attitude. Mr Heal stresses particularly the need for what is designated as "contemporary" design. I think he would readily find reason to modify his judgment were he to pay another visit to the United States. Modern designs are engaging the attention of very many manufacturers, and can be readily seen by scanning the advertisements that appear, for example, in the *POTTERY GAZETTE* and *POTTERY AND GLASS*.

To reinforce his point, Mr Heal makes the observation that the selection of decorated tableware on the home market seems to him to be disappointing, adding that this is after the home market has been open to the sale of such ware for at least twelve months. I suggest that Mr Heal is hardly generous in implying that in twelve months there is an ample opportunity for a flood of new patterns, whether traditional or modern, to appear on the home market.

I should further like to assure Mr Heal that his suggestion of an exhibit of the best kinds of modern styling in such countries as the United States, Germany, Finland, Sweden and Italy would be of great interest to the British manufacturers. I would also like to emphasise that the impression of Mr Heal that the British manufacturers have a closed mind on the subject of design is very far from the truth. It would, in my opinion, be fairer to say that the British manufacturer is fully alive to the importance of modern design, while also aware that there is still a demand for more traditional decoration.

W. F. WENTWORTH-SHEILDS
Director
British Pottery Manufacturers'
Federation
Federation House
Stoke-on-Trent

Moquette changed

SIR: Your reference to the Halifax Passenger Transport Department in the article entitled 'New moquette for old markets' (DESIGN April pages 18-21) might give an impression not quite in line with the facts.

The moquette pattern to which you refer (page 21, bottom right) is not now our standard. The new pattern (illustrated here) was selected in conjunction with John Holdsworth and Co Ltd - without any kind of "battle" being waged.



The old pattern was not designed by us. But I believe it has been one of the most popular ever produced by Holdsworth's for stage carriage use.

You make no suggestion as to what action should be taken when upholstery patching becomes necessary. We, like others, expect a pattern to remain available during the life of a vehicle. We, like Holdsworth's, try to be "business men first and artists second".

R. MACKENZIE
Halifax Passenger Transport
Department
Skircoat Road
Halifax

The good modern patterns illustrated in the article would wear as well as both the old and new patterns used on the Halifax Transport Department buses and could be patched with very little more care.

EDITOR



Change to a modern stand

The stand of the National Union of Manufacturers at the recent BIF, Olympia, showed an encouraging change from the ponderous styles of previous years. The heavy panelling and mouldings of the past gave way this year to a lighter feeling. As little money was available a layout was devised making use of standard units produced by the City Display Organisation Ltd. These units were illustrated in DESIGN March page 35.

BOOKS

Finer Points in the Spacing and Arrangement of Type, Geoffrey Dowding, Wace & Co Ltd, 5s 6d

For those who regard typography and typesetting as an art, this book will be of great interest. There are controversial views over the finest points of spacing and, rightly, the author is firm in his own convictions.

In such a meticulous art as typography, it is, of course, the finer points which make the job perfect one and the author shows that the principles go back 500 years yet underlie all the most readable and distinguished text or display material today.

The author's main objective has been to show how these points can make our reading easier. For instance, he shows that the separate setting of letters, normally ligatured, creates the impression that they are on the wrong set and a spotty appearance is caused by the white space round them. Conversely, the normally ligatured characters must be set separately when they occur in letter-spaced lines of upper and lower case. The author maintains that the use of the ampersand, or the short 'and' as it is sometimes called, is justified in all cases where the considerations of good setting demand it, that is when the spacing of the line and consequently of the whole page or text panel is improved by its use. He rightly invites criticism by setting the ampersand in a line where there is space for the full spelling, or by using it in conversational copy or in the pages of a child's reader.

The author's illustrations of 'before and after' examples have a very clear message for those who regard fineness as fussiness. Examples prove convincingly that close word spacing, which follows the tradition of the scribes of the manuscripts, makes texts easy to read.

It is to be hoped that this book will have a wide readership in the trade as well as among customers of the trade. Most books

on the arts and allied subjects are beyond the means of students and it was the author's belief that students of typography and printing would benefit more than others from such a book. This prompted him to persuade the printer, papermaker and publisher to forget about their profits and produce the book at cost. For this reason it can only be obtained direct from the publisher.

PETER HATCH

Form in Engineering Design, J. Beresford-Evans, Oxford University Press, 10s 6d

A survey of the appearance of goods made in this country would show that poor and nondescript shapes outnumber good ones.

Why should this be? No one deliberately sets out to draw bad shapes as such. They occur because the people who draw them lack knowledge of good shapes or cling to an obsolete idiom.

In his book, J. Beresford-Evans recognises that in spite of the efforts of industrial designers, it is the draughtsmen who, in the end, control the shapes of most of our manufactured goods, and he makes a very welcome attempt to give guidance on aesthetics to engineering draughtsmen. He does it very well, confining himself to essentials and arguing his aesthetics from a commonsense point of view, using very little jargon.

One of the points about aesthetic design which annoys the engineer-designer is that whereas clear-cut rules and data are a feature of engineering design, there appear to be no fixed rules but only governing principles in aesthetic design. Mr Beresford-Evans has managed to state his principles clearly without laying down rules except on one occasion when he strongly asserts that circular knobs are inexcusable for positional indication. The balance of the radio set on page 5 would have been much less serene had its designer been of that opinion.

The permanently fixed positions of components is one of the major bugbears of product design, and one of the characteristics of draughtsmen-designed products is that features like this are accepted and no effort is made to relate them to each other and to the form as a whole. Mr Beresford-

Evans shows how to deal with a problem of this type with a series of simple diagrams.

I feel more use could have been made of this diagrammatic demonstration. It would have been helpful, for instance, if the author had used the same method to cover examples of good and bad shapes, instead of exhorting the draughtsman to use 'dignified and well-groomed shapes'.

The chapter on meters and handles is very good indeed, and I liked the manner in which the radiused corner is shown to be capable of much greater interest than the elementary joining of two planes with a compass curve. I doubt whether this will make much impression, as every professional draughtsman I know fiercely upholds his use of compass curves against free curves, with arguments which cover the whole range of production, but boil down in the end to the fact that they are easier to draw.

The advice on presentation particularly appeals to me. In engineering circles good perspective sketches seem to be regarded as slightly frivolous or so much waste of time, and I think it shows the common-sense approach of this book that it points out how much more acceptable an idea is when a little trouble is spent on presenting it well. It is not mere salesmanship; in the author's words, "if the purpose of drawing is to convey thought then the purpose of presentation is to convey intention, to instil confidence and to carry other people with you".

This is the first English book on the practical aspect of product design. It is the only one I know that attempts to win over a still solid core of opposition of engineer-designers to the essential need for good appearance as well as good engineering and performance. It will help us all if it succeeds.

DOUGLAS SCOTT

A Second Book of Furniture Designs,
edited by Charles H. Hayward, Evans Brothers, 10s 6d

Evans Brothers have for many years been publishing a magazine and books for the home woodworker, under the able editorship of Charles Hayward. They have done a remarkably good job, too, in giving the information in a clear and concise manner. And although instructors of the Wells and Hooper school may have frowned, many a City and Guilds candidate has had cause to thank Mr Hayward. Perhaps the highest standards of cabinet-making were not aimed at, but at least the advice was sound for the average handyman.

On being asked to review this new book, I realised that I should have to take my courage in both hands. For the answer to my criticism was already ringing in my ears. "We have produced a book of designs of the sort that people want." Well, certainly they have all been covered.

I am well aware that this book will sell well because it meets the needs of people who 'know what they like'. This, however, is no excuse for bad designs nor the hard-wiry sketches which kill any subtlety which may be attempted.

Although this book has been produced essentially for the handyman at home, I have a feeling that it will find its way into a number of schools, and it is there that its use must be watched with care. For the 'Four-arm pendant with laminated centre ring' could easily become another example of 'Misleading design in schools' (DESIGN July 1953 pages 32-33) and the 'Attractive design suggestive of Swedish influence' can become dangerous material with which to teach design. Pieces more worthy of a kind word are the chests of drawers (page 6), the wardrobe (page 11) and the stool (page 17).

The first words of this book, quoted from

Sir John Denham, are: "When any great design thou dost intend, Think on the means, the manner, and the end."

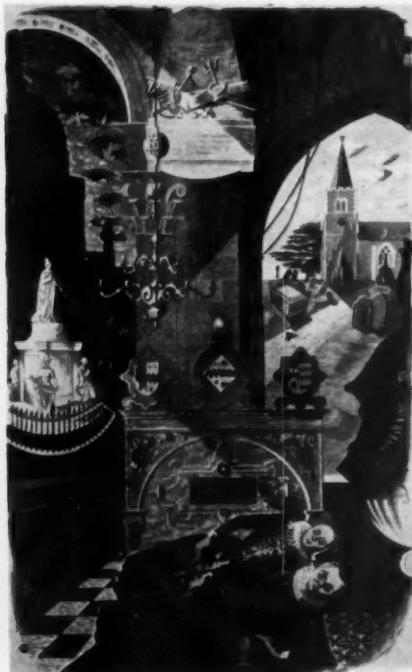
DENNIS YOUNG

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Page 18: drawing by A. Carter, MSIA.

Designers' addresses may be obtained from the EDITOR.



'Dome or Steeple,' a poster designed for London Transport by Denys Nicholls. It is one of the series of full colour prints of famous London Transport posters, which includes the work of Edward Bawden, A.R.A., John Minton, E. McKnight Kauffer and many others. The average size of the prints is 6" x 5". They can be obtained, price 1s. each (postage 3d.), from the Publicity Officer,

London Transport, 55 Broadway,
Westminster, S.W.1.



